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THE PRISM
OF NEWSROOMS:

AN INSIGHT INTO
THE NEWS
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Foreword

Research activities of the high education institutions have a crucial role in the economic and social development in societies based on knowledge. The School of Journalism and Public Relations since its formation is committed to a concept of a high education that relates study activities to research and to building new knowledge. Having this objective, the School of Journalism and Public Relations decided to establish the Institute for Communication Studies in May 2012, whose basic activity is a development of basic and applied research in the area of journalism, media and communication. With this publication, the School and the Institute for Communication Studies begin the joint research edition *Res Public*, within which the results of different research projects will be published.

The research published in this study was conducted as part of the activities of the UNESCO Chair on Media, Dialogue and Mutual Understanding, established at the School of Journalism and Public Relations in June 2011. This research is part of a wider project implemented with the technical support of the UNESCO Office in Venice, within the Joint United Nations Program on “Enhancing Inter-Ethnic Dialogue and Collaboration”. This program was implemented by UNDP, UNICEF and UNESCO with the financial support of the Government of Spain, through the Millenium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F).

As part of this project the web platform www.respublic.edu.mk was developed, where educational content on the standards of professional diversity reporting is being published, as well as research results, debates and other information for the media and their role in promoting dialogue, understanding, tolerance and co-existence of different communities in the Macedonian society.

The printing of this study was made possible with the financial support from the Open Society Foundation, London.

DIVERSITY THROUGH THE PRISM OF NEWSROOMS: AN INSIGHT INTO THE NEWS PRODUCTION PROCESS

Zaneta Trajkoska and Snezana Trpevska¹

The School of Journalism and Public Relations started a Project in February 2011 whose objective is to qualitatively improve the professional standards in the media reporting on diversity and to enhance media role in the improvement of inter-ethnic and inter-cultural dialogue and cooperation of the different communities and groups in Macedonia.

Macedonian media found it self in a deep professional and ethical crisis in the last couple of years. The influence of Government, politics, advertisers or the owners led to a situation in which the professional standards and ethical journalism have become forgotten and outdated concepts which no one believes in or calls upon. This condition also had a negative impact on the role of the media in promotion of social cohesion and dialogue among different communities - there are various examples of reckless or international reporting that encourages stereotypes, prejudices, divisions and intolerance.

Journalists need support, help and encouragement to resist all kinds of pressures that tend to convert or retain them to service one's political or economic interests. Journalists do not work in isolation, they are part of newsrooms and media, which are often complex organizational structures and without whose support it is impossible to enforce professional and ethical standards. Many journalists that refuse to be part of someone's political agenda or to serve someone's economic interests cannot stand alone against without the support of the newsroom, editors and colleagues and especially without the support of the wider journalistic community.

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The School of Journalism and Public Relations aims at helping all media outlets and the journalists who still believe and try to preserve ethical and professional principles and values. The Project consists of establishing an online educational resource (www.respublic.edu.mk), which will have multiple objectives:

- To help media in reporting on issues related to diversity in the Macedonian society, by publishing various documents and standards internationally and nationally;
- To enable the establishment of links between media outlets from Macedonia with regional, European or global organizations which have similar mechanisms and initiatives;
- To encourage interest and participation of citizens in the creation of media content related to diversity, cohesion and dialogue;
- To establish links with existing initiatives at local and national level that aim to improve dialogue and collaboration among communities;
- To initiate research on topics related to diversity reporting
- To work on awareness rising on the importance of diversity in the Macedonian society.

This research is conducted as part of the first (preparatory) phase for establishment of an online – educational resource and its primary objective is to identify the problematic issues in the newsrooms, as well as the attitudes and perceptions of editors, journalists and part of the owners on topics related to diversity reporting.

1. The need for research on diversity reporting

Republic of Macedonia is a democratic multicultural society. The actual positive emanations of its ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic diversity are in many ways a unique feature in the region of Southeast Europe and beyond.

The basic research challenge of this study is the dilemma whether the Macedonian people as a majority and the other communities that live in Macedonia perceive this feature, both in the past and today, as a threat to society's integration or as a common – and new regional and European – value.

The way in which different communities and groups are represented in the media, the opportunities and channels they have at their grasp to express their opinions and attitudes through the media content and be part of the media newsrooms is of enormous significance for the development of mutual understanding, coexistence, cooperation, tolerance and for the overall development of the Macedonian society.

Diversity in this society is all-encompassing : young and elderly, people of different economic and social status, employed and unemployed and socially marginalized, people of different religions or beliefs, individuals with different sexual orientation or gender identity, people of different national, ethnic or racial origin. All of them expect and deserve to be represented and presented in a fair and sensitive manner in the social, political and cultural life and through all forms of its media reflection.

In the European media policy, the issue of media pluralism and content diversity is emphasized as a central aspect in the exercise of the right to receive information and

the freedom of expression, guaranteed by Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Media pluralism has different dimensions, one of which is to provide *cultural pluralism* in the media. This dimension is related to the fair presentation and expression (active and passive approach) of the various cultural and social groups in the media, including ethnic, linguistic and national minorities. The cultural pluralism and diversity in the media sphere would be affected when different cultural, linguistic and social groups would not have access to the media or would be insufficiently represented in the coverage.

Cultural pluralism is also under risk if the media sector itself does not reflect cultural diversity in terms of multicultural staff in the media organizations, as well as if there is a lack of non-profit media outlets aimed for the minority groups².

The mass media, especially those that publish news and information, play a central role, especially when it comes to reflecting and nourishing cultural diversity in the Macedonian society. They influence the development of attitudes and beliefs, as well as people's perceptions for the other social and cultural groups and communities.

However, this influence does not always happen in the desired or expected fashion. The manner in which the media outlets represent and provide voice/visibility of various social actors, i.e. the manner in which they focus or frame the negative phenomena and processes, may unintentionally encourage stereotypes, intolerance, bad or hate speech, rather than argue against them. A large number of examples of negligent or intentional reporting were identified in the last decade and a half in Macedonia, in which there was a lack of sensitivity for the inter-ethnic, intercultural and inter-religious relations in the society.

2. Research objectives and research questions

The basic research objectives are as follows: (1) to provide an overview of the research and texts published on media reporting about different social groups and cultures that live in the Republic of Macedonia; (2) to identify the level to which media are informed of diversity reporting, as well as what are their perceptions, attitudes, practices and experiences; (3) to identify the manner in which the media covered two latest events with an emphasize on inter-ethnic/inter-religious/intercultural dimension; and (4) to summarize the concrete initiatives that were (or are) an attempt to positively promote cultural diversity in the media.

It is important to point out that this research does not aim to identify the media that most negatively reported about the different ethnic groups and to 'mark' them on that basis as ethically unprofessional and irresponsible media.

Rather, the goal is to discover, to understand and to stimulate internal mechanisms in the newsrooms that can help to reproduce the cultural diversity and the speech of tolerance into and through the media content, by indicating the most positive practices, examples and experiences. This positive practice and experience aims to help establish an innovative and an efficient mechanism for stimulating, monitoring and reacting to the

² The definition as well as the risks for the cultural pluralism are drawn from a study commissioned by the European Commission „Indicators for Media Pluralism in the Member States – Towards a Risk-Based Approach”, достатна на: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/media_task-force/pluralism/study/index_en.htm



media reporting related to diversity and intercultural issues in the Macedonian society, which is part of the Project supported by the UNESCO Office in Venice within the Joint UN Programme for enhancing inter-ethnic community dialogue and collaboration.

In order to reach the objectives identified, the research was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. What research data are available on the representation of ethnic and cultural diversity in the media, or on the way the media in Macedonia report about various social groups?
2. In what way do previous research and published papers describe or explain the situation with respect to diversity reporting?
3. What is the level to which news rooms are informed about diversity reporting - what are their perceptions and attitudes?
4. What is the practice and experience of newsrooms (of editors and journalists) in terms of diversity reporting?
5. In what way the media included in the analysis covered two recent events that may have a major impact on intercultural, inter-religious or inter-ethnic relations in the country?
6. What initiatives have been launched in the media sector aimed at accomplishing positive influence to the cultural diversity in the media?
7. What kind of regulatory framework exists on international and national level and what are the basic professional and ethical standards for diversity reporting?

3. Methodological framework

The research will largely rely on analysis of reports, publications, documents, as well as analysis of secondary data from previously conducted research on the media coverage of different groups and communities.

With an objective to collect primary data, 28 qualitative (semi-structured) interviews were conducted with editors and journalists, in order to identify their attitudes, perceptions and beliefs about the current state of the journalistic profession and the internal practices and experiences in the newsrooms in terms of diversity reporting.

The starting point is the approach that explores the *process of news production*, as a process that consists of a number of phases, procedures, routines and practices and organizational or ownership and corporate restrictions that affect the contents and the form of presentation of articles/news items in the press, television and radio programs. The journalistic routines and techniques of data collection, selection and editing determine the contents and the angle of view in the news, hence the picture of the “others” produced in them. The approach in the news production starts from the assumption that the selection and presentation of the topics, actors and events are limited by several factors: values of the news; scenarios for the news and the genres; ownership, control and political affiliation; origin, socialization and ethnic background of the journalist, the different approach (of the sources of information and the actors in the news); the relations between the press and politics and editorial policy, including the relations between

journalists and editors. Some of the interview questions referred to the extent to which journalists and editors are aware of, understand and implement the *professional journalistic rules and standards* related to diversity reporting.

Each interview was recorded and transcriptions were made from them, they were then analyzed with the method of qualitative (thematic) analysis. Some of the journalists and editors that were interviewed asked to remain anonymous; hence their names were not released in the study.

4. Sampling

The in-depth interviews entailed the application of the so-called theoretical sampling, which arises from 'the grounded theory'. According to the grounded theory, the researcher collects data (observes, conducts interviews, collects documents) until the moment of the so-called *theoretical saturation* or until the moment when a new empirical theory is completed.

At the start of the study the minimum number of qualitative interviews is determined, and during their conducting, when the researcher realizes that the terms and categories are refined, i.e. an empirical theory on the research problem is developed, he decides to stop collecting data. At the start of the study at least 20 interviews were planned, and by the end a total of 28 were conducted.

MEDIA REPRESENTATION AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Ljubomir Jakimovski³

1. Introduction

The fall of the Berlin wall, and thus the physical borders between the former Western and Eastern Europe, is probably the most significant event in the XX century, as it provided a new political, social and cultural energy of the integration process at the continent. With the joining of 10 new members in 2004 followed by Romania and Bulgaria, as well as with the new reforms aimed at establishing new “supranational bodies”, the European Union increasingly grows in the highest and most comprehensive integration process/model in history ever.

However, the idea of a Europe without borders recently encounters barriers because of the “fatigue of enlargement”, which are further multiplied due to the financial crisis in the south of the EU (Greece, Portugal, Spain, Italy plus Ireland) and the crisis of the Euro as one of the greatest achievements of the Union and its anchor and “amalgam”.

On the other hand, the “Internet revolutions” in 2011/12 from the Maghreb (Atlantic) to Yemen (Indian Ocean) caused serious proposals for modification of the Schengen system as a prevention of the potentially large number of new Muslim (Arab) immigrants in the EU countries.

In early 2011, the former French president Nicolas Sarkozy first, and then the German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced that the idea/model of multiculturalism in these countries experienced a failure. Several member states of the EU have adopted restrictive laws which banned some of the symbols (“burkas”) of the individual and the collective identity of the Muslim women.

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How should these processes be understood in the context of the previous intensive efforts for a construction of the so-called unique and/or common European identity and what is the place of the “Western Balkan” countries, which in the political and media discourse of the EU member states acquires a symbol status for recognition of “otherness” that is not compatible (or it needs a long time to achieve it) with that identity?

2. Intercultural communication and recognition of „otherness”

The visualizations of societies or cultures about themselves or the world are embodied in specifically established symbols that help recognize or identify pictures, emblems, signs, etc.

A particular society or a culture understands or creates itself through symbols and these symbols at the same time shape themselves through the structure and activities of that society or culture. The cultural history of the world evolved and it is still evolving in the context of symbols, which reflect the socio-political reality. At the same time these symbols enter this reality, in order to transform its confusing nature in an acceptable order.

The recognition and identification of “otherness” is not only a construction of meanings and categorization of people, their styles, every day practices and ways of organizing life, but also a unity in the search for a dynamic equilibrium.

In this context, what are the reasons that in Macedonia everyday life continues as if there is an existence of “parallel worlds”, when that particular “otherness” is not only recognized but it is also constitutionally and legally sanctioned as such, while being politically expressed through the language not only as a communication tool, but as a complex symbolic system also that includes psychological, social and cultural dimensions and meanings?

The distance between ethnic communities or social groups that set boundaries or ways of distinguishing from each other most often does not depend on those groups themselves, but on the “significant others” and, therefore, on the environment which is not immune to the established relations of domination and distribution of economic, political and cultural, i.e. communication power. Not only politicians but journalists also fall into the category of “significant other” – the one who influences the decision whether those relations will be harmonized, whether they will remain unchanged, whether the introduction of new values is going to be inhibited or whether mental barriers (including fear) would be something that people cannot overcome.

One way of breaking or at least minimizing mental barriers between communities or groups is intercultural communication and understanding, which allows public legitimization of interests. It leads to the establishment of an open dialogue, less burdened with prejudices and stereotypes – to the extent possible at least. This dialogue should certainly not be conceived only in terms of “understanding the other culture”, as often defined in the theories of cultural management. It should primarily be understood as an attempt to understand the society in the ways it uses and assimilates meanings and the ethical (or religious) codes that its members encounter, as well as the parallel development of an emotional empathy in that particular culture.

One should also keep in mind that in the process of intercultural communication some cultural elements may be mediated, while others associated with the so-called

culture of the everyday life (behavior, diet ...) humour and specific rhetorical or symbolic forms, are almost impossible to mediate.

These examples may cause partial or complete misunderstanding due to misconceptions about the meaning of an expression, just as it can cause a complete standstill in communication because of lack of knowledge, i.e. misunderstanding of the context of a specific proportion of the reality if the “other”.

In this sense, the individual or social groups meet difficulties or feel it is almost impossible to cross the Rubicon of “their reality” and not risk being declared a “traitor” and/or a “renegade”.

Communication almost always takes place under the pressure of unequal distribution of material goods and power, which in the contemporary information society is manifested through the different purchasing ability for possession and use of all information and communication products and/or tools on the market.

Societies in transition, such as the Macedonian, besides traditional unsatisfactory educational level of the population, already face all the dangers of a new “electronic illiteracy”, which marginalizes and excludes large portions of the older citizens not only from the processes of communication, but also from the ways of organizing the economy, work, social forms of life and education.

In what way then traditional media can create editorial agendas, produce content that (will) lead to a cultural, social and political inclusion, when the events at the Skopje Fortress (Kale) proved that the new electronic networks may mobilize people by spreading hate speech?

Things get even more complicated given that all types of elimination are qualified as a state intrusion on the freedom of communication on Internet.

On the other hand, a question arises on the most appropriate manner of applying paragraph 2 of Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR: 16) in preventive, administrative or judicial proceedings. Namely, the Macedonian judicial system is cannot exactly distinguish itself in excellence with sentences that would sanction hate speech from the traditional media, eventhough there are many examples in the case law of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

On the other hand, the number of those who are dissatisfied with the fact that socioeconomic, political, cultural and academic elites, being actively supported by the media, abuse the public sphere in a way that through the powerful multinational companies they even impose upon us the so called “Coca Cola culture “ increases.

Furthermore, as a surrogate of weakness, vulnerability to manipulation and breakdown of the senses and/or ability of the individual to self (responsible) action, the number of self-proclaimed “experts”, “analysts” and other abusers multiplied, as the eminent French sociologist P. Bourdieu once named them “fast-tinkers”.

The number is growing of those who believe that it is good for the citizens and the democracy that an “autonomous” public sphere in cyberspace is established as opposed to the “official” one.

Nevertheless, the example of the Skopje Kale, in some further deeper analyses, will confirm that new social networks can be also abused for an uncontrolled spreading of hate speech, to basically promote organizing a crowd and not groups of self-conscious,



socially responsible and actors that act on their own. Ultimately, since the 2006 campaign of the US President Barack Obama, the social networks (Facebook, YouTube and Twitter) became very significant political and efficient propaganda tools.

The new paradigm of intercultural communication, which was shaped by the contemporary communication theory under the influence of the expansive/multiplying digital technologies and globalization of communication, stems from the thesis that it cannot be analyzed solely as a peaceful and non-conflictual meetings of different cultural entities.

Basically it refers to an interaction between two or more communication channels/systems which cause tension and incorporate latent intercultural conflicts because of the sometimes divergent interests, quantifications political, economic, social, cultural, technological, social and even civilizational goals.

Therefore, it is sounder to understand intercultural communication as a contradictory process of converging cultural diversities, but also of distrust, and, at the same time, of identity preservation.

This understanding of intercultural communication at the level of relations between Western and Eastern Europe would represent one of the significant or necessary steps on the way to establishing a diverse and inclusive symbolic geography.

In this type of a common European cultural space, there is no citizen of any country in the “Western Balkans” that would find himself frustrated of being “frozen in the past.” We have always been convinced that people from the West are assessed on the basis of their individual values, but this is not the case. You would be asked where you are from and as soon as you answer Bosnia, Macedonia or Albania, people often become inaccessible and do not want to get to know you better as a person.

The phrase used in the past: “Yugoslav cultural space” suggests that the boundaries between “us” and “them” were firmly fixed. Hence workers and other citizens from the underdeveloped countries were known as “Southerners” in Slovenia and were perceived in a typically negative way, as less capable, lazy, aggressive, and were pejoratively called “chefurji” (Stankovič, 2005:351).

During the mass protests of the so called “Invisibles” that took place in early June 2011 in Ljubljana, there were shocking documentary television programs of the Slovenian public broadcaster on the “forgotten workers” that indicated a neo-colonial discourse – the argument went that they have such a fate only because they are not “ours” and they are such because they come from areas of the former Yugoslavia (Petrovič, 2010).

The neighbouring environment, one hundred years after the Bucharest Peace Treaty (1913), which divided Macedonia between Greece, Bulgaria and Albania, strongly echoes a political and media neo-imperial Balkan discourse.

Not only that the individual and collective human rights of self-identification of Macedonians in these three countries are not recognized, but also the official politics in these countries does not allow them to be statistically “recognized”. The continued policy of rejection towards the Macedonian minorities in these countries as those who are “strange” and who should be assimilated and melted in the name of the “one-nation policy” excludes, stigmatizes and discriminates all those who declare a “different” national, linguistic, cultural or religious identity.

The treatment of “others”, i.e. the Macedonians as national minorities in these countries is associated with the mechanisms of oppression from the colonialist period in Western Europe.

The fact that the UN, EU, Council of Europe and NATO allowed to be used as tools against the rights of Macedonians to self-determination and self-identification directly affect the “Western Balkans” to be constituted as a neocolonialist area.

The countries of the “third world” also pay an incomparably greater respect and responsibility concerning the decisions by the International Court of Justice in The Hague, in comparison to NATO, EU and Council of Europe that promote advocacy efforts for the rule of law as a basic democratic principle.

3. Political - cultural topography and a public opinion climate before the transition

The economic and social crisis in former Yugoslavia deepened between the 70ties and 80ties of 20th century. The constitutional changes in 1974 were not an appropriate response to the more apparent disagreements and conflicts between the republics and the provinces. , These political units acquired a wider constitutional status with these changes.

The a priori avant-gardism and the monopoly of the Union of communists as the only legitimate political entity, on the one hand, and the model of “contracting economy” on the other hand, sharpened the inconsistency and the inability of the political elites at that time to assimilate the advantages of the new scientific – technological revolution and the development of the market and other economic laws.

Indeed, despite the dominant ideology in Eastern Europe about the non-conflictual nature of the socialist society, in former Yugoslavia there were legitimate theoretical discussions about the different interests, their immanence and conflictness .

However, the emergence of the E. Kardelj’s book “Pluralism of the self-managing interests” in the early 1970’s , these debates lost their intensity and significance, as they were exclusively directed towards stereotyped variations of socialist self-management and the delegate system.

The deepening of the global crisis in almost all segments after the 1980’s and the inability to solve key social problems and contradictions by using such a model have led to an increase of citizens’ dissatisfaction.

A public opinion poll from 1986 determines the „dissatisfaction form the general situation” The research particularly emphasizes the fact that the critical attitudes towards the inter-ethnic relations in Macedonia (bad, mainly bad) climbed up to 29,53% from the negligible 3,15 in the previous year.: The positive trends of 77,48% decreased to 31,08%. The assessment of the inter-ethnic relations in Yugoslavia was even more unsatisfactory, because 47,49% of the respondents were not satisfied with the situation. The barometer of citizen’s satisfaction on health, education, communal and other services show a downside trend in the assessing of their quality (Petrovic and Kimov, 1988: 160-198).

Studies of the political – cultural topography in the mid 1980’s both in Macedonia and in former Yugoslavia also showed that contrary to the expectations of socialist self-



management to create new emancipatory culture, still the models of submissive political culture remain (Jakimovski, 1986: 204; Podunavac, 1983).

In his brilliant essay, D.Vujoshevic isolated 35 cults of the so called “nomenclatura”: the cult of boundaries and divisions, the cult of power, the cult of non-working, cult of celebration and parade, cult of discussion and indolence, the cult of silence and blurring, cult of “finding your way” and links, to the cult of the state appropriation, cult of errors (and forgiveness of errors), the cult of irresponsibility and incompetence, etc. (Vujoshevic in Jakimovski, 1986: 205).

These “anti-values” have shown their real “mercantilist value” in a matter of just ten years, with the beginning of the transition and privatization.

Those individuals who were formerly socially indistinguishable, but knew how to “find their way in the system”, created and implemented a model of privatization that helped them grab such a large portion of the material wealth to be able to really feel that they are enough to themselves.

The social property always seemed to be something “alien” to the former formal ‘titulars’ even though they were in charge of its management –in the meantime with the privatization, social property was no longer formally “theirs”/“ours” - a ‘legal’ robbery and misuse was happening in front of our eyes.

The “philosophy of silence” as a kind of an endemic political and cultural, but also a social and individual mode of survival and possibly advancement in the social ladder, inhibited theirs, but as well every other citizen’s awareness of the need of resistance. Thus the new conditions made possible the triumph of the “cult of mistakes”.

Judging by past and current political memoir literature in Macedonia, almost all key political, scientific and expert actors recognize that the privatization in the country was done unfairly and, therefore, it subsequently generated many and great difficulties in the modernization and development of society. However, no one is willing to claim responsibility for the faulty process.

Does this mean that the ‘cult of errors’ and especially the forgiving of mistakes triumph in the new social system?

Polls from this period reflect the public opinion climate in the society, the social conditions of individuals and groups, as well as their attitudes, opinions, beliefs and expectations. The agenda analysis and the frequency of questions and answers/data indicate clearly observable trends and their situational determination and time variability.

In general, four distinctive phases could be identified: (1) up until the 1970’s there was a stagnant political cultural and public opinion climate, (2) the conformity of public opinion, acceptance and monitoring of key social tenets prevail in the period between the 1970’s and 1980’2; (3) after 1980’s due to the deepening of the political, economic and social crisis, public opinion becomes more critical in view of the nature of the socialist self-management system and its stakeholders; (4) late 1980’s are characterized by the process of critical evaluation, de-dogmatization of not only politics, but also of other spheres of society. There was also the process of radicalization of critic and seeking alternatives.

The early 1990’s marked the inauguration of a new political system: private property, political pluralism, human rights and freedoms, valuing personality and its autonomy, etc.

It was expected that the new liberal capitalism will lead to an open space for citizen participation in broader economic, political and cultural processes within the so-called deliberative democracy, as well as a definite legitimization the role of civil society.

The moment when civil society acquired a legitimate “partner” status aimed at developing good management practices, the media and their “gatekeepers” could finally open the range of diversity reporting, even on topics that were treated as taboo for a long time and some were even criminalized for a long time, ranging from medical treatment of homosexuality to the so called ‘verbal delict’ (Jakimovski, 2003, pgs.113; Toš, 5-7).

4. The identity politics in Europe and „Western Balkans”

So where is Macedonia now after more than twenty years? In fact, the first part of the answer is that a real debate on the substance, characteristics and values of liberal capitalism in Macedonia have never been opened. In the early years of the introduction of political pluralism, major part of the public held the opinion that the “Old is now finished and the New is coming.” However, nobody has initiated a public debate on the social transition from socialism to capitalism, which in an oxymoronic fashion was called ‘the transition’. Instead of liberal and democratic, we had a sort of a “tycoon capitalism”, which basically destroys the idea of a society of greater social justice and care for vulnerable social groups. Given that much of the University based intelligentsia participated in the “corrupt privatization” there is a serious - almost historical - deficit of relevant and credible actors that would stimulate a debate about the direction in which the society was headed.

The answer to the second part of the question is also not optimistic. Geographically, as part of Southeast Europe, Macedonia perceived a strong – and strategically unique – emancipator potential in the prospect of the membership in NATO and EU, which was a process that also went on in other countries in this region. However, since the late 1990’s Macedonia, along with the countries coming out of former Yugoslavia (minus Slovenia plus Albania) is part of a distinctively ideological political concept called “Western Balkans”. This neologism is created in the EU and is one of the key terms of the accession process. The answer to the question what the Western Balkans is can only be obtained if it is turned into a negation and we ask what the Western Balkans is not. And the answer unravels itself: “It is not the European Union”.

Some authors consider that this term refers more to Western Europe and its identity problems than to some defined geographical group marked as Western Balkan. The critiques say that the strategy of the European Union towards this region is hegemonic: it is neither a complete exclusion, nor a rapid integration, but rather a process of dosing of patronage.

At one point it is an offer for assistance in joining, but in every occasion when a conditionality “benchmark” is not met or when there is some unresolved issue under the standards of EU administration, it is quickly transformed into a threat and conditioning.

The image for the states in the region as “being childish” and the frequent use of a “stick and a carrot” logic to development reproduces the paternalistic relationship of the EU towards the Balkans. The prospect of EU membership became a means of legitimization and



those that are already in the EU exclude and include, while those which strive for membership are on the “road to Europe” and therefore they are excluded (T. Petrovic, 2010).

The model of “exclusion” which was once theorised by Michel Foucault perhaps paradigmatically refers specifically to the example of Macedonia, of which certain concessions are required for the European integration that cannot be accepted, and they are imposed just because the country is “outside”. The paradox goes as far as the point that the “exclusion” of Macedonia is considered the “democratic right” to those “inside” where the “culture of compromise” is interpreted in a way that it represents a total degradation of the existing system of the international law!

The representation of the Western Balkans in the political and the media discourse in Western Europe shows that the notion of Europeanness is practically equated with belonging to the European Union.

This foundation of a European identity testifies the existence of a large intercultural gap between the European West and East.

The metaphorical contrast between the West and the East is vividly described in the book “Europe without Europeans” by the Slovenian philosopher A. Debeljak as a “terrible asymmetry of the European identity”: “If at first glance you may not recognize that I am from the East, ‘a Slav’, ‘Balkan’ and my physiognomy is silent about my ethnic background, still I can be recognized by the insecure movement on the floor. Namely, the political economy of insecurity can be even found in the tiniest movements and the play of the facial muscles. It can be recognized in the nearly insecure movements of the body and the reactions of automatism. My caution does not only contain the experience from the socialist poverty, (...), but the bitter experience of non-recognition is primarily hidden into it. This is not the same as being unnoticed, (...). Simply it refers to something that it is invisible and to the very present feeling that my place is not actually close to the saloon table where you sit with today’s issue of ‘Espresso’ and ‘International Herald Tribune’, but at its best it is somewhere outside, at the boundary of the acceptable public space, at a terrace, not the street, but certainly not in the arms of air-conditioned convenience for which I should be thankful. (...) (...)Slovenia, or rather the entire Eastern and Central Europe cannot be found in the dictionary of recognizable cultural topography of the West. This is because it is still not recognized for its language and it cannot hope to be civilized. It is still too unknown, alien, different” (Debeljak, 2004:24-25).

The term Western Balkans in the media and political discourse is almost accepted without remarks, although the states of this region have been treated like “children” who need a guardian. Some of those who are “inside”, meaning in the European Union, are allowed to form a kind of colonialist discourse when it comes to the use of the historical heritage or for appropriation of material and other resources, and in the case of Macedonia Greece abuses the position of member to forcefully change the national, linguistic and cultural identity of the Macedonians.

Out of the countries in the region, Bulgaria and Romania could be seen as a paradigm shift from a “communist repression” to a “depression after accession.” Macedonia, however, could be a classic example of “pre-accession depression” when 5 years after completion of the required conditions to start negotiations for accession to the Union, an additional requirement of identity character was asked for.

It shows that the EU does not perceive the Western Balkans as a region of poverty, wars, conflicts, “ethnic narcissism” only, but also as a space for “bulldozer diplomacy” and a “culture of compromise”, which implies “voluntary depersonalization”. That would be, of course, interpreted as acting in “free will”, therefore the schizophrenia in the media and political discourse becomes complete.

5. Media representation, discourses and stereotypes

Macedonia is a multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multilingual society. When the political system is defined, its inclusiveness, i.e. constitutionally incorporated mechanisms for society’s diversity practices to create effective multi-ethnic and multi-cultural democracy is emphasized. However, it seems that not everyone agrees with this definition or its related derivatives -not even the actors who are its creators. On the one hand, this is the case with the Macedonians, because the constitutional amendments after the Ohrid Framework Agreement of 2001, defined them as the “majority community” – a shift from the previous status of a ‘constituent people’. On the other hand, Albanians think that there is a need of a contract which would make the state officially become bi-national so that the Albanian language would become an official throughout the state. So after 12 years of the Ohrid Framework Agreement there is a condition in which the category “we” and “they,” “ours” and “theirs,” and therefore “our heroes” and not “their heroes” and vice versa still dominate politically and discursively in the media. In times of political party disputes, crises or in election campaign hate, intolerance and threats would obviously and openly manifest.

Intolerance persists in the political and media discourse through occasional eruptions that are often “eradicated” due to the interests of political actors who have a stake in the “power pie”. It is of particular concern that the civil society becomes divided in ethnical, religious, cultural and linguistic terms from a factor of inclusion.

The society is not able to “produce” joint integration and emancipatory forces, therefore the overall condition in it produces more politicization along ethnic lines, divisions and isolation in groups, which behave as “forced” to tolerate.

Even those individuals or groups that have a critical attitude towards these events, have to ultimately join “their camp” if they do not want to be isolated or sanctioned.

The main and most serious consequence of this political and media discourse is that larger communities (Roma) or vulnerable and marginalized groups with various types of disabilities remain “unrecognized”. The focus on ethnic themes enables the political and business elites to calmly build their “empires” in terms of dramatic social poverty and de-classification of vital parts of the population.

Because of this there is a lack of public debate in the media in Macedonia on the differences in economic and social power, expressed through the employment or unemployment ratios, the gap between the urban and rural development, poverty of persons or families that could live decently of their labour in the past, disappearance of entire social layers, etc.

This political and media mimicry is not accidental at all: journalists and media could jeopardize the status of fighters for the “national cause”, thus would risk becoming “traitors” if they show some “understanding” for the others around them. Because of this



the division between the “patriots” and the “traitors” dominates media and political discourse both on the side of the Macedonians and the Albanians, as the two largest ethnic communities in the country, even though it looks paradoxical.

The main characteristics of the political and media discourse in the leading print and electronic media will be analyzed through the analysis of the representation. It is used in the area of cultural analyses as a research optics (F. Saussure), but it is reaffirmed in the last two or three decades. To understand this concept it is necessary to possess knowledge – at least roughly – about the theoretical elements of the so-called structuralism. In simple terms, this is what is called epistemological twist in the works by the French post-structuralists. Namely, they decisively ended with the prevailing humanistic and largely objectivistic – view of the world, where social scientists see the society either as a sum of rational, creative and moral beings or they interpret it in terms of the individual and independent logic system (Giddens, 1977, 1989).

The poststructuralists (M. Foucault, J. Lacan, J. Derrida and others) found a range of arguments that flow into the claim that the society is essentially composed of a multitude of discourses that are constructed by individuals (as rational, moral, etc actors), which brings into question not only humanistic claims for the individual as an entire, reflected and a single being, but also those views (named as objectivistic) that see the society as some kind of impersonal structure.

Therefore, from a constructivist (i.e. post-structural) perspective the society is not an objective fact (even if it comes to real, self-sufficient individuals/actors or objective social structures), but emerges as a complex texture that is produced by different discourses on different levels.

According to the poststructuralists, the discourses represent an array of statements/ events or a medium and speak about certain issues in a certain historical moment - on the other hand, they shape/construct the topics in that way.

Thus, discourses (statements as one of the manifestations of language) do not reflect something that is “out there” (in “reality”), they rather construct it through various procedures of storytelling, classification, presentation and so on.

Therefore, language and discourse do not “determine” the world, but they shape it, construct it, thus bringing individuals in some specific relationship to the world, people around us and alike.

This, certainly, does not mean that constructivism assumes that in “reality” there are no “true” things, but insists that things (objects, people, phenomena, events, etc..) always become available through various discourses that shape (interpret) it to us in a meaningful way. In this light the question of representation in the Macedonian media could be set as follows: if discourses do (not) reflect reality but always represent it in culturally specific ways, then the interest should be directed to request answers to the following: how they do it, what kind of references they, sub-tones or associations they use?

Given that the processes of discursive construction of truth (reality) are mainly realized through texts and media in the contemporary popular culture as very specific representations of society, identities etc., we will try to expose this to a critical observation. The goal is twofold: to find the elements of problematic legitimization of the existing relations of power, or to find the possible emancipatory moments of their treatment as an issue.

Our political and cultural topography shows that Macedonian media in the reporting on diversity not only accept, but also nurture political discourse burdened by stereotypes. The fact that we are more than two decades in a transition and there is a new redistribution of property, economic and political power, does not sufficiently explain the legitimization of stereotypes that normalize always privileges to certain individuals or groups and marginalize others. What is the specificity of stereotypes? Stereotypes are very simple, clear, universally recognized, easily remembered and understood features attributed to individuals, while at the same time they are some sort of *types* with the ability to reduce the overall complexity of individuals or social groups to those few simplified and exaggerated moves (Lippmann, 1999: 86-90). Even more: these reduced images to fix something as *natural* and *unchangeable* (Dyer in Hall, 2000a: 257).

Stereotypes do not occur just anywhere, but usually where there are large inequalities in power relations between different groups. Namely, power is always directed against those who are submissive, i.e. excluded, and stereotypes are one of the key places where this exclusion occurs.

In accordance with their intertwining in the network of social power, stereotypes are some kind of a landmark between the normal and acceptable on one side, and abnormal and unacceptable on the other. This is done in a way that all things which are on the opposite side (as abnormal and different) are excluded in a way that (the other/different) they are delegated in the dark space of the dangerous, dirty and something considered as a taboo.

This looks somewhat complicated, but in fact it is a situation in which the stereotypes symbolically fix the boundaries between “us” and “them” as something essential and unchangeable, and then they conclude that there are negative feelings building up about something that is not “ours”.

For example, in Europe, white people have a stereotype for the different races (African American, Asian, Arab, Hispano-American), who are stereotypically perceived as lazy, dirty, less smart or religious fanatics. The term “Nigger” in the U.S. pejoratively refers to a Black person as a dirty, degraded creature – and even a “coon” (Bogle: 1973).

There is no complex research on stereotypes conducted in Macedonia, although they seriously contaminate the media and political discourse, and they very often (re) direct and (de) legitimize the social or historical process. There are texts that analyze individual fragments or identities, but the things are actually much more complex. Most of the representations appearing in songs, stories, jokes, anecdotes, legends, dances, books, information, expertise, or anywhere else, almost always have a pretty clear political or cultural implications in terms of legitimizing or problematizing of the current situation in the society.

Stereotypical representation is a very important point of intervention of power in the processes of labelling and, as such, we mark it at the first place in the analysis of the key approaches, although the scientifically motivated analysis never ends solely on this level. Also, as much as the analysis of what and how something is represented is important, also equally important are other aspects things that are not represented at all. Namely, the social reality is composed of complex patterns / networks of different processes, interpretation and events. This means that the overall complexity in different



text is reduced to more or less simplified and attractive narratives / stories, which should be understood that the reduction of complexity to coherent and attractive narratives is not problematic itself and it is probably even necessary to some extent in the processes of devising reality.

What must be taken into account in the critical analysis is the fact that while some events (subjects, interpretations, etc...) are in principle covered (recorded, represented, interpreted, used in representations), while others drop off from the agenda of relevance in the very beginning.

Usually those that drop off from the agenda are either the ones that are irrelevant or harmful to the holders of power in society. When analysing representation it is essential to find out and be attentive to the question what is represented, and to the question what is absent in the system of representations (interpretatively disappears or is deliberately concealed). It seems not surprising that F. Tonnies almost 100 years ago asked the question "Is it possible to have fair and reasonable daily press" (Tonnies, F., 1998:145).

The next important feature of the research on media representation is the issue of polysemy. Whether producers like it or not, it is a fact that a large number of representations, in this way or another, do not offer completely monochrome (political) interpretations of the society and the world. The meaning they place (or "discover" in the so-called investigative journalism), in different informative (and other) texts usually support or legitimate the forces of social hegemony. Different modes of representation in the media and in popular culture by representing the world in a very specific (hegemonic) way mostly support the existing social hierarchy of power. But because of the slippery nature of the text as such, its meaning is never entirely fixed (Derrida). And, finally, because the ideological constructs of reality are never entirely completed in some group and without having residues in some completely coherent ideological images of the world, they are never unequivocal (Južnič, 1973: 15-60).

And, finally, as there are hegemonic so there are explicit (politically) articulated anti-hegemonic representations. Therefore, there are systems of representations that very explicitly and consciously problematize the dominant models and offer some clearly developed alternative events, images and interpretations. The specific analyses cannot, certainly, cover all plural aspects of representations simultaneously. Since in reality things are quite complex and intertwined, the most insightful analyses are those that cover more elements. Most of the representations, either appearing in architectural or monumental buildings, artworks (paintings and sculptures), photographs, stamps, flyers, film or video, songs, jokes, anecdotes, legends, dances, novels, comics, magazines or CDs, scientific studies or expertises, usually always have very clear practical / political implications in terms of legitimization or problematization of the existing social system.

6. The future of multiculturalism in the Balkans and in Macedonia

The prevailing media thematic focus in our society is still collectivist. Thus, in texts in Albanian language on the events of 2001 are dominantly interpreted as a struggle of the "bare handed people" for equality, while for those in Macedonian language this is dominantly "an attack on the state." Although 12 years have passed there is still no

consensus on whether a war or military-political conflict occurred. The Ohrid Framework Agreement, which appeared as some modus, is variously interpreted and instrumentalized (political: position – opposition of the Albanian parties). The American author R. Hislope sees the “corruptive exchange” between ethnic elites as one of the causes for the events in 2001 (Hislope, 2005). However, L. Mincheva, regards the actions of the “trans-boundary network of ETSM (Albanian ethno-territorial separatist movement) from Kosovo (Mincheva, 2001) as a key factor for this. After the “spill-over effect” the Ohrid Framework Agreement followed and the phase of “overcoming conflicts” and “building trust” was reached, where the international community also took part (represented by EU, USA and NATO).

Twelve years after the events of 2001, rather than having greater participation of citizens through decentralization and development of local self-government, there is only a redistribution of power on ethnic principles. Consequently two dominant “ethnic-political blocs” were established. The Ohrid Framework Agreement, according to McGarry and O’Leary falls into the category of consociationalism in distribution of power.

However, according to Horowitz, the integrative power-sharing involves creating multiple points of power, which should have been allowed with the decentralization of 2004. He believes that it is a mistake that local government rather than being ethnically as colourful as possible, it was constructed in such a way as to achieve greater ethnic homogeneity (Ilievski, 2008:182). The direct actors in the conflict, either as “defenders of the state” or “fighters for equality” (or vice versa as the so called “Slavs” or “Shiptari”), remain less and less socially recognizable with each new division of power, while the addressing of health consequences as well as the personal status and the status of their families was prolonged due to the divisions of “us” and “them” that could not be overcome. Two post-conflict social groups with ethnic background are equally affected, but although they are actually a big marginalized group, due to the divisions and prejudices, it would be unrealistic to expect that they will together identify / articulate the common points of the requirements they would deliver to “our” / “their” political elites.

However, the internally displaced people are the most marginalized post-conflict social group and they are so unrecognizable to the media and political actors and it appears that if they are not mentioned they would not exist in reality.

This project has a noble mission to explore and reaffirm the professional and ethical standards in reporting on diversity in the Macedonian journalism. The interviews with journalists and editors in MRT confirm the picture that is generally recognizable: the programs on radio and television in Macedonian and Albanian language not only that do not have common elements of professional and editorial agenda, but they realistically function as parallel services. And it is a question of journalists and editors who have attended much national and international training on diversity reporting!

The topic of multiculturalism is not immanently Macedonian, but it is very important for our society. In the referent publication titled “Multiculturalism: surmounted or undefeatable concept,” some competent national and foreign authors search for answers to the dilemma set (Forum, 2007). The position of a foreign author is indicative that Western Europe could learn from Yugoslav and the Balkan experience (Rossig, 2007: 80-90). The title says that in Western Europe there are different views about multicultur-



alism, and when Russia is added here, as a country that represents the East, the specific historical, religious, linguistic and cultural contexts, it gets even more specific meaning. What is the future of multiculturalism in Macedonia then?

First, Macedonia will continue to develop as a democratic multicultural society because the provisions from the Ohrid Framework Agreement are reflected in amendments to the Constitution. The implementation of this agreement is a condition for Macedonia's accession to NATO and the EU. These two organizations, failing to handle with care the bloody denouement of former Yugoslavia, consider the post-framework Macedonia as their most successful project. The expansion of the conflict in 2001 is prevented, Macedonia transformed from a user to a security service provider and multiculturalism is considered as part of the successful Euro-American Balkan story.

Second, Macedonia is expected to continue working on strengthening the trust between the Macedonian people as a majority and other ethnic communities, mostly the Albanian. EU and its member states would not invest new additional major sources on training or projects, but they will be wary of the danger of compromising some projects, such as the OSCE's project on early learning of Macedonian language in the first class of primary education and the withdrawal of the "international factor" from it.

Integration solutions are, of course, necessary, because the system of secondary and higher education in mother Albanian tongue without a good knowledge of the Macedonian language would be a real barrier to mobility in business and employment, flow of ideas, goods and services, joint projects in culture, science and research, etc. The insufficient knowledge of the Macedonian language would be one of the most serious threats for a reduction of the already low level of integration into society on a long term. Of course, the least what is needed in Macedonia is continued specific informative ghettoization specific information, as a fertile soil to nourish or strengthen prejudices and stereotypes that would further contaminate and make the intercultural communication difficult.

Third, the future of multiculturalism in Macedonia will largely depend on the impulses it receives from the wider regional environment. Multiculturalism cannot be implemented exclusively in Macedonia, but its future must be seen as generally accepted and implemented regional model and practice. Regardless of the official (state) concept of "mononational states," there are minorities in Albania, Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia, they speak their own language – even then when the state prohibits it - and they have a special ethno-cultural identity.

Macedonians living in neighboring countries have the status and rights that correspond to democratic Europe only in Serbia: institutionally organized through a form provided by the law, they have their own Member of Parliament, and the Macedonian language is in official use in some communities, newspapers and publications are printed and radio and television programs of local public services are broadcasted in Macedonian.

The Macedonian minority has a certain kind of political and educational rights only in the municipality of Pustec in Mala Prespa region in Albania, although it inhabits Golo Brdo and Gora as well. In 2011 due to the omission of the field for national background, the Macedonian minority did not participate in the census in Albania. The topic of multiculturalism in Greece and Bulgaria cannot be set at a public debate at all. These member states of the EU do not even enforce the decisions of the European Court of Human

Rights for cultural and political organization of Macedonians, nor are the recommendations of the Commissioners for Human Rights of the UN and OSCE applied.

Fourth, the future of multiculturalism in Macedonia will depend on the existence and empathy increasing not only towards the “ours”, but also towards the “others”. Therefore, the moment when the political and economic elite of the Albanians in Macedonia and the media in Albanian language begin to openly advocate for the rights of Macedonians in Albania and publicly condemn their violation, the building of confidence in Macedonia will be accomplished by much greater commitment and effectiveness.

Fifth, the people and the countries on the Balkan need far more confidence, solidarity and a sense of connectedness. The burden of negative experience from the past, the immature ethnocentric ideas for “great states” of the Albanians, Greeks and Bulgarians are still circling like a ghost over the Balkans. In the countries of the Middle East major events occurred, whose outcome in this moment is strategically and geopolitically hard to predict at this point. The Balkans is the link of Europe with these parts of the world rich in oil. But, it is a relatively small space, where the negative repercussions of the events that cause radical physical movements of its edges cannot be dealt with by any country individually. If they want to strengthen their economic and other performances, the nations and countries in the Balkans should have a comprehensive regional cooperation. They would assess their special and regional specific weight in the EU and in the modern international community in an integral and complex way if they set free from the conflicts and the other negative legacies of the past. Their European path and future will increasingly become connected by recognizing and respecting the mosaic of all equally worth national identities in the Balkans.

Sixth, Macedonia has made great steps towards those needs and challenges of the new era and this was solved constitutionally. Its example could serve as an inspiration to other countries in the region. However, if Macedonia remains lonesome lighthouse in the restive Balkans Sea of pseudologia fantastica, stereotypes and hatred, of slavery to the ideology of “blood and soil”, it is a question how long it will emanate a positive climate in the region. In fact, it is necessary for the Balkans to release faster from the “balkanization” as a term with an exclusively negative meaning and a synonym for wars, suffering and divisions, primitivism and retrograde and reactionary ideologies.



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EUROPEAN STANDARDS, LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND ETHICAL PRINCIPLES FOR DIVERSITY REPORTING

Snezana Trpevska

1. Introduction

The term diversity reporting covers a wide range of issues related to the way the media should report on various social and cultural groups in a democratic society. These issues are equally subject to legal norms as they are to ethical rules and standards accepted in the journalistic profession. This topic is present in the documents of all international and European organizations that have media and freedom of expression as the focus of their attention. In different ways, all their documents emphasize the role of media in improving dialogue, tolerance and solidarity among people.

Hereafter we focus on the standards specified in the documents of the Council of Europe, which has been very active in the field of human rights, especially regarding the issue of balance between freedom of expression and other human rights in the past three decades.

The key document that sets out the basic principles regarding these issues is the European Convention on Human Rights, together with the interpretations of the European Court of Human Rights set in its decisions. Relevant resolutions, declarations and recommendations of the Council of Europe relate to this document. The document also explains the fundamental principles contained in the Convention and in the interpretation of the European Court of Human Rights decisions.. In this review we focus at some of the more significant documents of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.



As a member of the Council of Europe, the Republic of Macedonia has ratified the European Convention on Human Rights, now an integral part of the national legislation. This means that courts in Macedonia are obliged to apply or to refer to its provisions. The standards set forth in the documents of the Council of Europe have been incorporated in the national Constitution - the legislative and legal system reforms are aimed at their full implementation and effectiveness of the case law in the country. The most relevant provisions of the Constitution and the domestic legislation concerning the media reporting on diversity will be presented in this review. Finally, we shall review the professional standards and ethical norms established by the Code of Journalists of Macedonia.

2. Documents and standards of the Council of Europe

The legal instruments on freedom of expression and the role of media in the fight against xenophobia, racism, anti-Semitism and other forms of discrimination are established within the Council of Europe with the *European Convention on Human Rights and Freedoms*, which is closely related to, and inspired by, the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The provisions of the European Convention are supplemented with the interpretations in the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg and with other referent conventions, resolutions and recommendations adopted by the Council of Europe.

Article 10 (paragraph 1) of the European Convention on Human Rights promotes the right to freedom of expression as a complex right which is consisted of three components: freedom to hold opinions and freedom to receive and impart information. The right to request information is not explicitly stated in Article 10 (unlike Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights).

However, its importance is clearly emphasized in the practice of the European Court of Human Rights and in the documents of the Council of Europe, especially in the context of journalistic freedoms and rights: the freedom to report and comment on matters of public interest, freedom of editorial policy (including the right to rough speech), the protection of sources of information, intellectual property, protection from physical violence and attacks in the workplace and protection from seizure of materials.

Furthermore, paragraph 2 of Article 10 of the ECHR lists the legitimate restrictions to the freedom of expression - provided that they are clearly prescribed by law, that they are protective of legitimate goals and they are instated as a democratic necessity.

Any restriction should be set only in case of real necessity and should be interpreted very narrowly. This means that the freedom of expression is a basic norm and the restriction should be an exception. Of all mentioned limitations, the most relevant is the one related to the protection of the rights of others. This means that the protection of freedom of expression provided for in Article 10 does not extend to publishing racist, xenophobic, anti-Semitic or other discriminatory speech.

The European Court of Human Rights and the Council of Europe stress that the freedom of expression, pluralism and tolerance are very important for the democracy and free political debate. But equally important for the democracy are the promotion of tolerance, understanding and prevention of conflicts, because the more different groups

in society know each other and enter into mutual relations, the lower the risk of social tensions is. The media play an important role in promoting pluralism and tolerance in the public debate by widely distributing information and they serve as a space for exchange of views and dialogue.

Although the European Convention on Human Rights does not explicitly mention the right to human dignity as a separate right, the European Court of Human Rights, by its rulings and its case law, emphasizes that the very essence of the Convention is the respect for human dignity and freedom of people, as well as tolerance and respect for the dignity of all human beings as a basis of the democratic pluralistic society (McGonagle, 2009: 18). The Court has reviewed the notion of human dignity in the context of various provisions of the Convention, which specifically highlight the negative impact of “hate speech”.

The absence of a clear definition of the concept of human dignity is the reason why it is difficult to determine which types of statements or reports released in the media can be considered as violations of one’s dignity.

The approach of the Council of Europe on this issue, which is defined in two key recommendations in the area, consists of two main aspects: (1) prevention, prohibition and punitive action towards certain forms of expression (inciting hatred, racist statements, etc.) and (2) promotion of tolerance, understanding and intergroup and intercultural dialogue⁴. Although both recommendations cover similar issues, they are adopted as two separate documents, out of which the first one refers to the negative role that media may have in spreading hate speech, while the other focuses on the positive approach aimed at promoting tolerance, understanding and dialogue.

In the Recommendation (97) 20 on hate speech⁵, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe defines hate speech as “all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including: intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin.”

The European Court of Human Rights held the view that “... in some democratic societies it may be necessary to sanction or even prevent all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify hatred based on intolerance (including religious intolerance)⁶.”

This, in other words, means that hate speech should not be tolerated in a democratic society. Recommendation 97 (20) advises member states to take appropriate measures to combat hate speech, including hate speech spread through the media, so that they would introduce a comprehensive and an effective legal framework that takes into account the balance between freedom of expression and the right not to be discriminated against. In order to protect freedom of expression, the conditions for its limitation should be very narrowly defined, they should be applied on the basis of objective criteria and be subject to a subsequent judicial review.

4 The principles and standards of the Council of Europe are consolidated in the two key recommendations adopted by the Council of Ministers in 1997: *Recommendation (97) 20 on „hate speech”* and *Recommendation (97) 21 on the media and the promotion of a culture of tolerance*.

5 *Recommendation (97) 20 on „hate speech”*; Available at http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/media/Doc/CM/Rec%281997%29020&ExpMem_en.asp#TopOfPage

6 *Gündüz v. Turkey* (2003), § 40.



Also, the authorities need to be extremely careful when assessing whether to impose restrictions to the freedom of expression, because not every critical and rough speech is hate speech at the same time⁷.

*Recommendation (97) 21 on the media and the promotion of a culture of tolerance*⁸ which highlights the positive approach of the Council of Europe urges media to adopt measures and good practices to ensure media professionals to become more sensitive to issues of multiculturalism and tolerance. Such measures include organizing of training programs, facilitating access to media for different social groups, promoting of intercultural programs and avoiding negative reporting and dissemination of stereotypes for certain groups.

The Council of Europe also discussed the issue of hate speech in time of social tensions and conflicts, when free expression can easily be threatened and when media and journalists suffer the most. This is the main issue that is discussed in *Recommendation (96) 4 on the protection of journalists in situations of conflict and tension*⁹ where member states are advised to develop policies and take actions that focus on prevention, such as: appropriate insurance, affordable and safe working conditions for journalists, protection measures and physical safety of journalists and others.

These issues are also covered in the *Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers on Protecting Freedom of Expression and Information in Times of Crisis* adopted in 2007¹⁰, which state that in all emergency situations and circumstances, such as wars, terrorist attacks, natural disasters and so on, it is of vital importance that the media inform the public on the violations of human rights. In addition, the Guidelines the Council of Europe call on the media to observe professional standards with accurate, timely and comprehensive information and to provide a positive contribution to the prevention and resolution of crises, by encouraging a culture of tolerance and understanding among different groups.

The right to freedom of expression as defined in Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights should be exercised along with other freedoms and rights defined in the Convention, such as freedom of religion, as well as educational, cultural and linguistic rights. The Council of Europe has particularly emphasized the need to balance freedom of expression and freedom of religion, as two potentially conflicting rights (Zankova, 2009: 23).

This issue is covered in the *Resolution 1510 (2006) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on freedom of expression and respect for religious belief*¹¹, which emphasizes that hate speech toward religious groups does not correspond to the objectives of the European Convention and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights.

Documents adopted in the last decade by the Council of Europe pay much attention to the protection of human dignity in the changing technological environment. Among the first documents relevant to this issue are the *Declaration on a European Policy for*

7 See more on hate speech: Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH), Committee of Experts for the Development of Human Rights (DH-DEV), *Report: Human Rights in a Multicultural Society – Hate Speech*, http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/cddh/3_committees/

8 *Recommendation (97) 21 on the media and the promotion of a culture of tolerance*. Available at: http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/media/Doc/CM_en.asp

9 *Recommendation (96) 4 on the protection of journalists in situations of conflict and tension*. Available at: http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/media/Doc/CM_en.asp

10 *Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers on protecting freedom of expression and information in times of crisis* (2007). Available at: http://www.coe.int/t/dc/files/events/2011_terrorisme_onu/crisis_en.pdf

11 *Resolution 1510 (2006) on freedom of expression and respect for religious belief*. Available at: <http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta06/ERes1510.htm>

*New Information Technologies since 1999*¹² and *Recommendation (2003) 9 on measures to promote the democratic and social contribution of digital broadcasting*¹³.

Internet offers tremendous opportunities for individuals to produce and distribute content, to actively participate in social networks and to acquire new knowledge and skills. With its entire potential, the Internet is a new technology that encourages communication, information sharing and democratic processes. But, at the same time, this brings many risks to privacy and human dignity, many opportunities for spreading false information, reducing professional standards in journalism and limited access of certain groups to the possibilities offered by the new technologies. The Council of Europe points out to all positive and negative consequences of the use of information and communication technologies in its *Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on Human Rights and the Rule of Law in the Information Society (2005)*¹⁴.

On the other hand, in *Recommendation (2007) 16 of the Committee of Ministers on Measures to Promote the Public Service value of the Internet*¹⁵, the Council of Europe emphasizes the social and ethical dimensions of the information society and the need to promote a culture of dialogue and mutual respect of all groups and individuals through new technologies.

Public service broadcasters are considered one of the most influential factors in a democratic society, because their mission and responsibilities are directly related to the preservation of pluralism and diversity, and through the promotion of social cohesion, tolerance and understanding. The Council of Europe in its many documents continuously stresses the importance and value of public broadcasting whose main mission is to support the basic political, legal and social values in a democratic society.

In the *Recommendation (2007) 3 on the Remit of Public Service Media in the Information Society*¹⁶ it is stressed again that the public service broadcaster is expected to be a reference point for all individuals in society, to be a forum for a democratic debate (thus reinforcing a democratic participation) and a factor of social cohesion and integration among individuals and communities. Public service broadcaster need to promote cultural diversity and identity, to integrate all communities and groups, including minority groups, young and old, privileged and underprivileged, reflecting their problems and promoting the messages they emanate.

Such diversity in the programs of the public media reinforces the sense of mutual trust and shared responsibility among all groups in society. The public service broadcaster should use new technologies, interactive services and digital platforms to encourage inclusion of all groups and individuals (especially young people and marginalized groups) in the democratic debate.

The Council of Europe adopted two important documents in 2007 that emphasize the importance of different types of media for pluralism and diversity in the society: *Dec-*

12 *Declaration on a European policy for new information technologies (1999)*. Available at: <https://wcd.coe.int/wcd/ViewDoc.jsp?id=448133>

13 *Recommendation (2003) 9 on measures to promote the democratic and social contribution of digital broadcasting*. Available at: http://www.ebu.ch/CMSImages/en/leg_ref_coe_r2003_9_digital_broadcasting_280503_tcm6-5032.pdf

14 *Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on human rights and the rule of law in the information society (2005)*. Available at: <https://wcd.coe.int/wcd/ViewDoc.jsp?id=849061>

15 *Recommendation (2007) 16 of the Committee of Ministers on measures to promote the public service value of the Internet*. Available at: <https://wcd.coe.int/wcd/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1207291>

16 *Recommendation (2007) 3 of the Committee of Ministers on the remit of public service media in the information society*. Available at: <https://wcd.coe.int/wcd/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1089759>



laration on protecting the role of the media in democracy in the context of media concentration¹⁷ and Recommendation on media pluralism and diversity of media content¹⁸. Both of these documents emphasize the role of non-profit, local, minority and social media in opening space for dialogue, in meeting specific needs of particular groups in the civil society and promotion of social cohesion and integration. In 2009, the Committee of Ministers adopted a special Declaration on the role of community media in promoting social cohesion and intercultural dialogue¹⁹. This Declaration defines community media as a different sector, which complements public and commercial broadcast media. They are non-profit, rely on voluntary participation of members of civil society, and their actions are intended to achieve a social idea that is good for the community.

Audiovisual media were subject to special consideration both in the case law of the European Court of Human Rights and in the documents of the Council of Europe, mainly because they have a great influence in shaping public opinion and in shaping the cultural values. A key document of the Council of Europe for the broadcast media is the *European Convention on Transfrontier Television*²⁰. The Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms is referred to in Article 7, paragraph 1 of the Convention on Transfrontier Television, which states that all elements of program services, in terms of presenting the content, shall respect human dignity and fundamental rights of others.

In this context it is important to mention two other documents of the Council of Europe, which are of great importance for exercising of the linguistic and other rights of the communities and their access to the media. The first document is the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of 1995*²¹, where Article 9 states that member states are obliged to recognize the right to freedom of expression of national minorities in their language and that they will not be discriminated against in the access to the media.

In accordance with the legal framework relating to the broadcast media, states should introduce criteria and mechanisms for the national minorities to be enabled to establish media outlets of their own, to have access to media contents and to take other measures to preserve cultural pluralism and promote tolerance.

The second document is the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 1995*²², where Article 11 states that member states are obliged to ensure the establishment of media outlets (radio, television), i.e. broadcasting of programs in the regional or minority languages, both within the public broadcaster and the commercial broadcast sector. This obligation applies to the introduction of general conditions and the provision of financial support (wherever possible) for printing daily newspapers, as well as production and distribution of audiovisual programs in the regional and minority languages. States should also support education and training of journalists and other professionals who work in the media that publish contents in the regional and minority languages in their country.

17 Declaration on protecting the role of the media in democracy in the context of media concentration (31 January 2007). Available at: <https://wcd.coe.int/wcd/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1089615>

18 Recommendation CM/Rec (2007)2 on media pluralism and diversity of media content. Available at: <https://wcd.coe.int/wcd/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1089699>

19 Declaration on the role of community media in promoting social cohesion and intercultural dialogue, Available at: <https://wcd.coe.int/wcd/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1409919>

20 European Convention on Transfrontier Television, Available at <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/132.htm>

21 Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Available at: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/html/157.htm>

22 European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, Available at <http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/en/Treaties/Html/148.htm>

3. Constitution and legislation of the Republic of Macedonia

All fundamental values associated with ensuring and protection of human rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms are built in the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia. The provisions of Article 10 of the European Convention are incorporated in Article 16 of the Macedonian Constitution, which explicitly prohibits censorship and guarantees freedom of expression in all its dimensions, the freedom to establish media and the freedom of access to information.

There is a distinction between two basic concepts in the modern criminal law: punitive offense that is consisted of verbal or other expression which encourages violence against a particular group or endangers the safety of an individual member of the group (offense of endangerment related to a particular malicious act) and punishable offense which is related to humiliation, insult or slander of a certain group or individual (offense of injury to dignity and reputation)²³. The term “hate speech” is usually associated with discrimination, racism or xenophobia and mainly refers to calling on or incitement to violence, discrimination, hatred or intolerance towards members of a particular group identified by national, racial, religious or other landmark.

The fuelling of ethnic, racial or religious hatred and intolerance is a punishable offense under Article 319 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Macedonia: “A person who uses force, harassment, endangerment of safety, exposes national, ethnic or religious symbols to disrespect, damages someone else’s items, desecrates monuments, graves or otherwise causes or incites national, racial or religious hatred, discord or intolerance, shall be punished with imprisonment of one to five years.”

Article 417 of the Criminal Code prohibits racial discrimination, while paragraph 3 of the same article specifically prohibits spreading of ideas about the “superiority of one race over another” and the advocacy of racial hatred or incitement to racial discrimination. Such actions are accompanied by criminal imprisonment of six months to three years.

According to Article 394, hate speech also involves “the spreading of racist and xenophobic materials through the computer systems”, which involves spreading of written materials, images or other forms of presentation that promotes or encourages hatred, discrimination or violence against individual or group on the basis of race, skin colour, national, religious or other affiliation. This provision also applies to acts committed by other types of mass media.

The Council of Europe and other international organizations have adopted several documents and recommendations which require from the member states to abolish the provisions for the acts of defamation and insult in the criminal laws, i.e. that such act is treated as subject to misdemeanour proceedings only. Following these guidelines, and as result of the initiative by the Association of Journalists of Macedonia, the provisions of the Criminal Code which specifically treated criminal offenses against honour and reputation, involving libel, insult and exposure of personal and family conditions through the

23 See more on pages 48-50 in: V.Kambovski and M.Lazarova Trajkovska (2012) *Legal Analysis of the Concept of Punishable Offense of Hatred and Hate Speech*. Available at <http://www.jpacademy.gov.mk/upload/PDF%20Files/Pravna%20analiza.pdf>



“press, radio, television or other means of public information or at a public gathering” were lifted in November 2012²⁴.

At the same time the Law on Civil Liability for Defamation and Libel was adopted, which regulates the procedure for compensation of damage after detecting liability for acts of insult and defamation, including offenses committed through the mass media.²⁵

The implementation of the Law on Prevention and Protection from Discrimination (Official Gazette No. 50/2010) began on 1 January 2011. It is the first law in the country that attempts to treat discrimination and it envisages new protection mechanisms. Article 7 of the Law states that “harassment and humiliation is a violation of the dignity of a person or group arising from a discriminatory basis and which has the purpose or result of violating the dignity of a person or introducing of a threatening, hostile, humiliating or intimidating environment, access or practice. “

The Law on Broadcasting contains provisions concerning the guiding principles for the programs, and it places a special emphasis to the respect for human rights. Therefore, Article 68 stipulates that the broadcasting programs are based on the following principles: “... nurturing and developing human and moral values of the person and the protection of privacy and dignity, equality of freedoms and rights regardless of sex, race, national, ethnic or social origin, political and religious beliefs, property and social status of people, encouraging of a spirit of tolerance, mutual respect and understanding among individuals of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, ... openness of programs for presentation of the various cultures that are part of the society, preserving and fostering national identity, language culture and national artwork ... “.

The respect of human rights, human dignity and values also refers to the advertising contents. Hence, Article 89 of the Law on Broadcasting stipulates that advertising and teleshopping must not jeopardize human dignity, be based on the emphasis of national, ethnic, religious, sexual, racial or other differences, encourage behaviour that is dangerous to the health or a behaviour that undermines security, as well as to encourage behaviour that endangers the environment and offends religious or political beliefs.

The Law on Broadcasting also contains an explicit prohibition of hate speech broadcast by broadcasters’ programs arising from the grounds for limitation of freedom of expression provided for in paragraph 2 of Article 10 of the European Convention. In fact, Article 69 of the Law states that “in the broadcasters’ programs, as well as programs that are re-broadcasted through public communication networks, programs that aim at violent overthrowing of the constitutional order of the Republic of Macedonia and at encouraging or calling for military aggression or stirring of ethnic, racial, sexual or religious hatred and intolerance”, are not permitted. In this context we will only mention the provisions of the Law on Personal Data Protection, which regulates certain issues related to the protection of privacy of the persons, which are indirectly related to the respect of rights of various groups and communities in the Macedonian society.

24 Law on changes and amendments to the Criminal Code, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, number 142 from 13.11.2012. Available at: <http://www.pravo.org.mk/documentDetail.php?id=233>

25 Mass media means “newspapers, magazines and other print media, radio programs and television, electronic publications, teletext and other forms of editorially shaped content published or broadcasted daily or periodically in written, audio or image form in a fashion accessible to the general public. “Law on Civil Liability for Defamation and Libel, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, number 142 from 13.11.2012. Available at: <http://www.pravo.org.mk/documentDetail.php?id=6426>

4. Ethical and professional standards

The freedom of journalists to establish their own professional associations that develop and adopt self-regulatory documents and codes of ethics allows promotion of the standards of the journalistic profession. Self-regulatory systems are most appropriate means for promotion of professional standards and, if they are effective, there is no need to introduce special legal rules. They can be a useful tool to prevent unprofessional and harmful informing, as well as for raising the quality of produced media content. The Association of Journalists of the Republic of Macedonia has adopted a Code of Journalists²⁶. Article 10 states that “a journalist shall not intentionally produce or process information that jeopardize human rights and freedoms, he/she shall not speak with the language of hatred and encourage violence and discrimination on any grounds (ethnic, religious, racial, gender, social, language, sexual orientation, political ...).” Article 11 stipulates that “the journalist shall observe the generally accepted social standards of decency and respect for ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in Macedonia.” Journalists bear responsibility for the violations on this ground in front of the Court of Honour of the Association.

The provisions of the Code of Journalists establish professional conventions and principles of reporting but it treats them as a general rule solely. What is missing from the overall picture is an additional specific elaboration of the general provisions of the Code on several practical issues related to diversity reporting. The first attempt in this direction in the country is the production of the Diversity Reporting Handbook, published by the School of Journalism and Public Relations in February 2011²⁷.

In the documents of the Council of Europe professional journalistic standards on the reporting of different social groups are often recalled. The media should report accurately and impartially and to be sensitive when it comes to tensions between communities in society. They should avoid encouraging stereotyping and treat individuals as equal without “linking their behaviour with a particular community when it is irrelevant to a particular case.” This is especially relevant when it comes to ethnic, cultural and religious minorities. For instance, when reporting on offenders their ethnic background shall not be mentioned, unless it is really necessary.

5. Journalistic ethics and journalistic standards in the Macedonian media

In the research on the attitudes and practices in diversity reporting, some interview questions were focused on ethical standards and rules. Many journalists and editors interviewed for research purposes said that except for the existing Code of journalists they do not follow any other written guides on the reporting of all topics, including diversity. Only part of the media applied practices and experiences from abroad: “... *the television station possesses a translated foreign literature aimed for our newsroom. It was the re-*

26 The Code of Journalists of Macedonia is available at: http://www.znm.org.mk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=47&Itemid=62&lang=mk
27 Available at: http://www.vs.edu.mk/attachments/799_PRIKACNIK.pdf



sult of training attended by one of the editors abroad; therefore he shared his experience with the colleagues in the newsroom.”²⁸

Unlike this practice in the Western media, the Macedonian newsrooms do not have internal ombudsman, whose role would be to maintain honesty and accountability with the public. The ombudsman, acting as some sort of “public editor,” usually mediates the conflicts that are caused by external or internal pressures, encourages the use of professional and ethical standards, as well as self-criticism among journalists.

Besides the Council of Honour of the Association of Journalists, there is no other form of self-regulation of the entire media industry in Macedonia. In other countries such bodies are made up of journalists’ associations, media owners and members of the public. Individual attempts of self-regulation are identified in a small number of media outlets, which is usually implemented in the form of a review of the content published: *“Journalists, selected reviewers say ... This is a good front page. It is a bad picture at the front page. This and that comment missed the objective. This and that is well placed...”*²⁹

When it comes to the public service broadcaster, by definition it is supposed to be an example of highest standards, professionalism and quality in reporting. There were gross violations of journalistic ethics observed in the public service broadcaster in the past twenty years. Many examples have been identified: editors directly involved in political activities³⁰, or internal rules adopted which “motivate” journalists to provide advertisements in the program, and this was severely criticized in the public in the last ten years³¹.

6. Conclusion

The Council of Europe has adopted a series of charters, conventions and recommendations that provide basic guidelines on the ways and means whose application guarantees the freedom of expression and at the same time ensures cohesion, tolerance and mutual respect for different groups and communities is preserved. These documents provide clear guidance on how to balance the exercise of freedom of expression with other rights and democratic values : dignity and privacy, protection of national security, promotion of tolerance and prevention of conflicts etc. Issues of cultural diversity and media reporting on diversity are discussed in more documents related to: prevention of hate speech and promotion of tolerance, protection of minors, public service broadcasting, media pluralism and prevention of concentration, the role of community media, new information services and protection of human rights etc.

The documents of the Council of Europe often call for an intercultural dialogue - exchange of views among individuals and groups from diverse ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds. Intercultural dialogue is essential to building a Europe without borders, because it promotes the exchange of knowledge without prejudices and based on mutual respect, trust and reciprocity. Along with the promotion of intercultural dialogue, the Council of Europe was dedicated to fighting hate speech, discrimination,

28 Quote from an interview with Ljubica Mangovska, programme editor of Tera TV in Bitola, conducted on April 18th 2011.

29 Quote from an interview conducted with Dimitar Culev, Utrinski Vesnik, April 9th 2011.

30 „MRTV editor led a rally of DUI in Cair”, an article published in Vest on 21.3.2009. See more at: <http://www.vest.com.mk/?itemID=CDD320A96BFC0148AFDBA7C02B075DC6>

31 „Reality show and public service”, an article published in Utrinski Vesnik on 16.10.2006 година. See more at: <http://217.16.70.245/?pBroj=1697&stID=30046&pR=20>

racism and xenophobia. For this purpose, a special European Commission against Racism and Intolerance was established, which has adopted itself a number of recommendations regarding the anti-discrimination policy and the fight against racism.

The constitutional and legislative framework of the Republic of Macedonia incorporates all basic international regulations regarding the balance between freedom of expression and “the fundamental rights of others.” In this respect, hate speech and discrimination on the basis of ethnic, religious or other background, is sanctioned and as far as the broadcast media are concerned strict rules are applied.

In regard to the print media, and more recently for the online media, the rules of the Code of ethics should be applied, which are at present too general. There is a need of an initiative by the journalistic and professional community for their detailed review and for an improvement of the quality of news reporting.

The examples of self-regulation in the media are rare, almost do not exist, which directly affects the manner of reporting, which sometimes goes so far as to artificially create some social reality. Establishing of an institution for media self-regulation, such as a council for ethics in the media or information ombudsman would be positive since it would encourage the use of professional and ethical standards, and self-criticism among journalists.

In this context it should be pointed out that Slovenia has a very positive experience with the information ombudsman as an independent entity.

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REPORTING ON DELICATE ETHNIC ISSUES

*Sefer Tahiri**

1. Introduction

During the 1990's Balkan media have shown that they possess highly effective power to divide people based on their ethnic background, inciting and encouraging conflicts. Mass media across the region were flooded with content based on propaganda and hatred towards the others, who were considered and/or declared enemies. Often the media, both print and electronic, used to compete in their intention to spread stereotypes and create the worst possible image of those who they (used to) perceive as "the others". The role of media in the countries of former Yugoslavia, first in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and later in Kosovo and Macedonia in many cases was directly aiming at inciting hatred and violence among once peaceful neighbours, in the bloody wars of the last decade of the XX century.

Media had a notorious role in inciting the Balkan bloodshed. A 1990's journalist from a Croatian television "proudly" stated in front of a camera: "I am ready to lie for the sake of my homeland". This statement which can be found in the Kemal Kurspahic's book "Crime at 19:30", illustrates at its best the extremely problematic role of the journalist during a war conflict at the time of the bloody dissolution of former Yugoslavia.

There are diverse opinions when it comes to the role of journalists and media in the wars on the territory of former Yugoslavia. If one can accept the widespread opinion that journalists did not incite the wars, it is also hard to dispute the fact that, in many situations, they were either main instigators or supporters of the conflicts. Perhaps in this context, as Kurspahic also noticed in the above mentioned book, a part of the media in former Yugoslav republics were degraded as tools aimed to 'produce' the enemy, and to incite war and justifying military actions. Yet there were individuals in the media that refused to be used in the war propaganda, by defending the generally accepted ethical val-

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ues and professional standards in journalism. Media in Macedonia were also attributed evident role in inciting of the 2001 conflict in the country. The Bosnian journalist Senad Slatina presents a very negative view in the text “The war in Macedonia was ‘Bosnia light’”. According to him, media were the ones that started the battle first, both Macedonian and Albanian. Other parties joined the killings at a later stage” (Slatina, 2001).

The media conflict preceded the war conflict. This conclusion can be viewed as a summary drawn from the discussions at the conference on “The history and the apocrypha – demythologization of the year 2001”, held in January 2011 (www.soros.org.mk). The same is highlighted in the study of Macedonian Institute for Media on the coverage of the Macedonian conflict in 2001 titled „Macedonia – the conflict and the media“. However, if we try to analyze the genesis of the conflict, it is not that the media are innocent, but one cannot say that they were the main instigator of the conflict. During and prior the conflict, hate speech and intolerance was detected in the political and public discourse as a reflection of the divisions, since there are two “parallel worlds” in cultural, religious, and in a broader social aspect living for decades in Macedonia. As for the reasons and factors that contributed to the commencing of the conflict, wider analysis is indisputably necessary, where the specific role of media, journalists and editors who even before the conflict used to write and report about “theirs” in the ethnic sense would be recognized, as well as the language used to convey the media content identified.

Before the conflict, a considerable number of journalists were writing and reporting exclusively from the position of Macedonians and Albanians and not as professionals. There were stereotypes and prejudices created in the Macedonian language media about Albanians who reportedly are prone to problems only, crime, human trafficking and drugs, which contributed to deterioration of the collective image about them among the public and the society. The same was happening in some Albanian language media, which reported unilaterally and created prejudice towards Macedonian people, often in derogatory context calling them “Slav-Macedonians” in commentaries and other forms of uncritically transferred statements of politicians. Even the programmes of MRT, a public broadcasting service, and later the private televisions, radio stations and newspapers were reporting unilaterally and in imbalanced manner in ethnic terms. In a certain way it followed the previous practice since there were indications and allegations of tense media atmosphere.

While political elites were not surprised by the conflict, the media were surprised by the military charge and harshness since they were not ready for such a scenario. As the conflict between NLA and the state military-police forces expanded throughout mountains of Tetovo, Kumanovo region, Radusha, Arachinovo and other crisis regions, the inter-ethnic tensions begun to emerge and rise. The divisions in the political and the media sphere had begun.

Due to these and other negative experiences in the recent years, it was necessary to invest a great deal in training of journalists and editors and all those decision-makers in the media with regard to their editorial policy. In addition, efforts are being made to adopt standards and professional practices in the European Union, the USA and other developed democracies. Their professional knowledge and adequate regulation and self-regulation about journalism and the media ethics remain part of our inspiration to

endeavour continuous improvement of journalists' and the media coverage and reporting on ethics issues.

One of the biggest professional challenges or one of the most significant tasks faced by journalist is to write about people who are different from them based on several substantial components. If a source is from a different ethnic or religious background the role of journalists is to publish opinions of personalities, ideas and their views fully accurately, despite the fact that differences can run deep. In a region such as Southeastern Europe, where social and ethnic differences are immense, the accomplishment of this ideal is very hard to achieve. But, it is not impossible. If journalists want to create trust in society, then it is essential for them to do – to achieve at first glance – the impossible: to apply the professional knowledge and practices and to promote understanding and tolerance on differences. Although after more than a decade after the conflict, when Macedonia marks 12 years of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, in a real optimistic perception it could be concluded that progress has been achieved in reporting on complex spectrum of issues of ethnic character by the media, however, there are more problems remaining due to the production of the two “parallel realities”.

Thus, despite the progress, although to a much lesser extent compared to the period ten years ago, there is still ethnic rivalry, examples of stereotypes, hate speech and unilateral reporting can be found in many media. It is in particular manifested during election campaigns or crises that arise in the ruling political structures and generally in the governmental-party relation to the opposition.

This is also confirmed by the event which is subject to analysis: the incident in Skopje fortress on 13th of February 2011. During this event two fan groups clashed: on one side there were “Komiti” and on the other “Shverceri”. Police could not prevent the close contact of the supporters and the opponents of the building under construction, which was indefinitely claimed to be a museum, church-museum or church only. In this event, according to the journalists' coverage, there were slaps, fists and stones flying on all sides.

The second event which is also subject to analysis is the solemn opening of the Memorial Centre of the Holocaust in Skopje, on 10th of March 2011. At this point, tribute was paid to 7.418 Macedonian Jews deported by the Bulgarian occupation authorities in 1943 in the Nazi concentration camp Treblinka. Compared to the first one, the reporting context of the media, both in Macedonian and in Albanian language, is positive and affirms key values of the human life and dignity.

2. Media representation of Kale events

Skopje Fortress - Kale is situated on the high hill called Gradishte, over the central part of the city with a view on Vardar River. For centuries, it has been strategically important. Being the highest point in the city, Kale has always been appreciated by the local population. There used to be settlements even before the walls of the fortress were built. According to archaeologists, the earliest known inhabitants of this place have been settled here since the Neolithic and early Bronze Age, 4000 BC. The Fortress we are seeing today has been first built in the Byzantine time (6th century) with stone walls 121 meter high. According to archaeologists, the stone blocks out of which the fortress has been built, were taken from the ruined city of Skupi.



Due to its strategic location, the fortress has been built, destroyed, reconstructed and re-appropriated many times in history by various invaders. After the 1963 earthquake the circular and square towers of the fortress were conserved and restored. Kale is one of the most popular places for picnics, recreation for city residents, as well as for foreign tourist visits in Skopje. The fortress offers fantastic view of the city, as well as a possibility to reach the old town within few minutes from there. According to the official website of Skopje Kale the latest “archaeological excavations at Skopje Kale begun on 14 May 2007”.

The idea itself for the project on latest archaeological research on Skopje Fortress originated from the undeniable need for final effectuation of the great potentials of such a location and its remodelling with new content and new adequate urbanization. The Government of the Republic of Macedonia and the Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski unreservedly stood behind this initiative, pushed for by the Director of Office for Protection of Cultural Heritage, Pasko Kuzman.

Once the idea for implementation of the excavation project on Kale was promoted, immediate reactions and opinions emerged among the public. The project was mainly commended, hoping that finally the location on Skopje Fortress will be put in the right function as cultural, historic, tourist and urban centre of the capital. But, at the same time there were some highly politicised reactions in favour of earning cheap political points. Thus, for individuals, working on Kale was unacceptable, mostly because of the possibility of hiding and keeping silent any of the items being discovered. Bearers of such extremely unsubstantiated claims were a group of Albanian intellectuals, who were fostering the public with misinformation (through the media, tribunes, public manifestations, etc). Their “key argument” was that the excavation on Kale will contribute to reportedly hiding whole cultural layers which, according to them, existed on this location and it would change the history. They were placing stories and concerns in every possible way about alleged culture of the old Illyrians and Dardanians, whose artefacts should be found on the fortress, and that the excavation would hide those artefacts. The full operation were continuing on Kale and there were two new sectors opened for more coverage on the terrain projected for research.

Transparency was necessary to introduce the real meaning of the cultural heritage and for developing the necessary care for it, not only among the participants in the action but even more among the local population which at any time may visit Kale and directly monitor the work of the archaeologists (<http://skopkokale.com.mk/mk/istazuvanja.php>). On the other hand, the President of the Association of Albanian Historians in Macedonia, Skender Asani, supported by the NGO “Wake Up”, promoted the view that the archaeological researches should be transparent and not be dictated by daily politics, and they should involve other schools of archaeology from the region and the world who are familiar with the Illyrian ethno-culture.

There were different opinions among the public in Skopje and the wider society for the archaeological excavations and for the construction of a new building on Kale. However, it was the media that “ignited” ethnic passions. Specifically, the public was not informed about the character of the building that was being built intensively on Kale, until it was officially stated. The start was marked by a statement of the director Pasko Kuzman broadcasted on the Macedonian television and later on Alsat-M saying that a

church will be built on that location and that there is a decision from the Government of the Republic of Macedonia on that. That moment caused different reactions – there were both ethnic and religious manifestations.

Most journalists and editors interviewed in this project stated that the reporting on this event was objective and respected the professional standards and ethical norms. According to the interviewed journalists, editors and media directors, the rules for writing about ethnic groups during the reporting on this event were respected - the self-regulation rule being that it is particularly important to represent the members or representatives of that group and that their opinions should be included in journalistic texts and audio-visual contents.

During the reporting on this event, actors involved in the media production of news and other information and contents consider that they had neutral position towards it. „Basically, we were trying to level it with an issue that should be handled by the police and end as soon as possible. We were trying not to spread the topic so it does not become a topic that will continue to be discussed about. Even in my column, I brought it down to an incident of people who do not know what they want and who haven't even seen anything better in their lives“.³²

In general, editors in chief claim that they were cautious during the reporting on this event. „Journalists are mostly young; most of them did not have the opportunity to report on such specific events. First thing I did was my presence on the field together with my journalists. Not everyone does this but I estimated that my presence is necessary, to see what is going on and provide guidance on how to proceed further. We monitored the situation to its end; I remained at work, we were extremely cautious and correct in the reporting. We wanted to reflect what really happened“.³³

In this event, there was a conflict with ethnic background between two fan groups and it was very complicated for reporting due to the nature of the developments. Generally both sides had different attitudes and opinions, whereas their presentation in an objective and accurate fashion was a significant part of the role of the journalists. „Frankly speaking, I was astonished by the understanding of the journalists on this event. They were not biased on this event. It was obvious that they want to treat it very objectively“.³⁴ Apart from being professional responsibility, the objective reporting is seen also through the wider social prism of unambiguous commitment of the media about the obligation of all to contribute to calming the tensions. „My opinion is that we tried to present an objective picture about the events. And we did not contribute in any way to fully set fire to the ethnic conflict, ethnic tensions in that period, perhaps we even tried to provide a special angle of viewing things in order to calm the tensions from the media point of view.“³⁵

Most of the interviewees spontaneously agreed that there was political influence in the development of this event. During the reporting, journalists showed interest to contextualize the event on Kale because an ethnic, religious and generally social conflict does not arise out of the blue. Usually there is a 'prehistory' of a conflict about which parties have different interpretations. „When the incident at Kale happened, a common

32 Quote from the interview with Goran Mihajlovski, Editor in Chief of the daily newspaper Vest, conducted on March 31 2011.

33 Quote from the interview with Muhamed Zekiri, Editor in Chief of Alsat TV, conducted on March 29th 2011.

34 Quote from the interview with Bardhul Zajmi, ALB TV, conducted on April 19th 2011.

35 Quote from the interview with Marjan Nikolovski, journalist in Sitel TV, conducted on April 25th 2011.



view was to present the event as it really happened. There were two manipulated groups of very young people who had caused the incident in the interest of certain political purposes. In the reporting about Kale, besides giving the basic news of what happened, we tried through political analysis, statements of analysts, experts, etc. to capture the political moment in the whole situation, respectively to show that the incident involved a lot of politics, political parties. Considering the fact that it was about the involvement of the ruling parties, we presented it as such”.³⁶

But the main view of the Macedonian radio-television, contrary to the role of a public service, implied a kind of an attempt for political destabilization.” „I assume that these media were reporting on behalf of political goals and wanted to cause destabilization.”³⁷

The media in Albanian language has also recognized the involvement of politics. According to them, the event had political background. „We saw that a political game is taking place in the background, meaning an intention planned in advance, thus we were very cautious about it, to show who is the “victim” and who is the “culprit”, who created the game, in a way we condemned all participants in that part, always telling that if historical monuments should be preserved, then they should be kept as they are, and we were not supporting constructions, we were against any kind of construction there and we presented our view”.³⁸ This event revealed the disunity and the dishonesty among the main participants in the executive power. „The Government of RM, particularly the Macedonian partner, once again deceived the Albanian partner in the Government; again they worked behind their back. This was our way of reporting, i.e. that certain people in Macedonia still did not understand that there are Albanians and Macedonians living here and that if they want to build something they have to take into consideration how Albanians feel about that.”³⁹

Although the event was delicate and tense, all journalists and editors said that they did not either bring or determined written or unwritten rules in the newsroom about reporting on it. „In our newspaper (‘Dnevnik’) we have no such rules, if you ask me now how would I report on an incident in Old Town, in Struga or in Gostivar, we have no rules how to proceed. Regardless of the fact that this is about sensitive areas, we are being guided by some principles that we have as humans and as a society in general”.⁴⁰

Many journalists and editors even thought that the Code of Journalists of Macedonia was a sufficient frame for professional behaviour towards this event. „No, there is no need of concrete written or verbal rules for this event. It simply fits into our daily working rhythm. And we do not measure since in our society every day is more or less intense, in fact, we are such a society, sometimes similar tensions are produced, sometimes bigger, and other times smaller than that, sometimes they just happen”.⁴¹ Reporting on such events in fact has always been associated with journalistic professionalism. „We do not have either written or unwritten rules, it has been reported in a chronological manner, according to the events, all was well-argued and supported by photograph, there was no such tendency of hiding something. We endeavour to objectively cover the event, regardless of the consequences”.⁴²

36 Quote from the interview with Mladen Chadikovski, Editor in Chief of A1 television, conducted on April 8th 2011.

37 Quote from the interview with Dimce Veljanovski, Editor in the Macedonian radio-television, conducted on April 18th 2011.

38 Quote from the interview with Mevaip Abdiu, Editor in Koha TV, Tetovo, conducted on April 21st 2011.

39 Quote from the interview with Migena Gorenca, Editor in Chief of the Second service of the Macedonian television, conducted on April 19th 2011.

40 Quote from the interview with Branko Gjorgjeski, Editor of the daily newspaper Dnevnik, conducted on April 15th 2011.

41 Quote from the interview with Risto Lazarov, Director of Telma, conducted on April 15th 2011.

42 Quote from the interview with Predrag Petrovik, Editor in A1 television, conducted on April 12th 2011

Journalists and editors reject the accusations that the media incited this conflict through reporting few days before it happened. „Otherwise, I heard critics that the media incited the clash between people there, and all I can say is that the media were unfairly accused. Politicians have started it all and then journalists are accused. It does not mean that journalists acted great, but they certainly did not start and did not provoke the conflict”.⁴³

However there was opposing opinion as well. “The media caused it, unaware of the situation they entered into an essential issue, which touches inter-ethnic relations. If you remember well, you will see that the first information that came out about the construction of a church probably irritated the other side, another population in Macedonia which considered or probably considers that Kale is a site which belongs to them. And I think this was wrongly placed information, since in principle the reality showed that this information is not true, a church is not being built, but a museum that looks like a church or I don’t know, whatever, which is very different from a religious object, a space where exhibits would be collected, then great deal of the found exhibits are from the Ottoman period”.⁴⁴

3. Media coverage of the Memorial Centre of the Holocaust

The general conclusion about the coverage on the opening of the Memorial Centre of the Holocaust in Skopje is that the media jointly – literally like rarely before – promoted positive values. That feature associated with this event is substantial compared to reporting about delicate topics such as inter-ethnic relations, when it is hard to find the angle that highlights mutual values. „The Memorial Centre is related to the tragic events in the past in Skopje and Macedonia, and all agree that the Holocaust is dark event in history, but still something distant for all. All media reported that a museum has been opened commemorating the victims of a horrific regime of the past - looking at it from a certain historical distance. But, when they report for events that affect them as an ethnic group, they react differently”.⁴⁵

For our area, which is saturated with many conflicting interpretations, journalists and editors consider that the reporting on the opening of this centre demonstrated high level of joint approach. „As far as that event is concerned, I can say that the reporting was more unified compared to the previous (event on Kale), in terms of the fact that most media, at least those I have observed, gave a kind of positive connotation as an event that is being marked”.

Interviewed journalists and editors of news provide highest value about the opening of the Memorial Centre of the Holocaust. „Such an event, the history that occurred here in our environment deserved such treatment. I have no doubts about it”. Although that value cannot be denied, still distinction is being made about the news that “directly affect”. According to the statements, “the reporting on the Holocaust is different since it does not affect us directly. This is the only reason. That is something that happened in a distant past, and present generations do not remember it, or have only read about the holocaust”.

43 Quote from the interview with Erdem Ahmed, Editor in the Second service of Macedonian television, conducted on April 28th 2011.

44 Quote from the interview with Marjan Nikolovski, journalist in Sitel TV, conducted on April 25th 2011.

45 Quote from the interview with Kole Cashule, Editor in Chief of the daily newspaper Vreme, conducted on March 31st 2011



4. Conclusion

Ethnic divisions have played a major role in Kale events, and journalists and media institutions found themselves in a delicate position. Being members of ethnic communities, journalists were trying to bring forward the professional standards which require objectivity, but they acknowledge that the event was politicized and complicated.

Overall, with respect to Kale events, journalists were not “defenders” of the interest of the ethnic community they belong to; instead they were observers trying to report on all its complexity. Journalists, editors and managers were trying to avoid prejudices and stereotypes, but did not ignore political roots and reasons for this event.

In the reporting on the second event, the opening of the Memorial Centre of the Holocaust, common points related to the historical tragedy of the Jews of Macedonia were highlighted, regardless of the language and the audience to which the media address. They were reporting on this event uniformly and without prejudice. Also, the sources of information were correctly quoted. In this way, the media fulfilled their obligation to give the audience objective information and details that promote human values and solidarity with the community that suffered the worst possible human tragedy throughout the history.

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CONTEXT AND FACTORS OF INFLUENCE IN MEDIA REPORTING IN MACEDONIA

Snezana Trpevska

1. Introduction

Media reporting (especially in print media) was studied in the past few decades within sociology and the study of communications by using different theoretical and research approaches, which among other things have been answering the questions as to how and why the imprint about ethnic minorities, foreigners or “other” cultural groups constructed in the news, is often negative. The proponents of the approach that placed emphasis on the *news production process* (Gans, 1979; Cohen, 1980; Cohen & Young, 1981; van Dijk, 1988a; Gordon and Rosenberg, 1989) explained that diversity reporting is heavily influenced by the so-called “frames” of talking about the members of ethnic, religious or other cultural groups, which are induced by the mindset of those who produce the news. Namely, media reporting is an array of discursive actions and decisions consciously situated in the journalistic community and in the community in which media products circulate (Cotter, 2009).

The produced media content that is a result of diversity reporting practice contain value categories and norms that are a part of a the categories and norms of the wider community – community to which the one who produces the news content belongs to. In other words, each journalistic story or news item itself embodies cultural and discursive complexity of the journalist and the community he/she belongs to (Cotter, 2009).

However, according to the researchers of the news production process, the existence of prejudices and stereotypes among journalists is not sufficient to comprehensively understand and explain all aspects of media reporting on diversity. The news production approach starts from the assumption that many factors influence the selection and manner of presentation of topics, actors and events in the news: understanding of



journalists and editors about the news value; scenarios and genres of news that reporters and editors set out in writing about the events; ownership, control and political affiliation of the media, origin, social status and ethnicity of the journalist; editorial policy, rules and relations in the newsroom, including relations between journalists and editors, and many other factors.

Although as part of this and other theoretical models about the factors that influence the news production process many empirical researches have been conducted (Cohen & Young, 1981; van Dijk, 1988a; Gordon & Rosenberg, 1989; Schudson, 1989; Allan, 1999), still most of them analyze only individual factors in more details, especially the selection of news and the concept of newsworthiness.

A smaller number of research studies focus on understanding and describing the whole process of news production and on developing theory about diversity reporting based on empirical data. Hereinafter we will try, at least to some extent, to compensate this gap, given the reality in which information desks of electronic and print media in the country operate.

2. Method

This research is based on the analysis of 28 qualitative interviews conducted with journalists and editors in electronic and print media in Macedonia, who have been actively focused on diversity reporting. Transcripts were made of all interviews and a qualitative thematic analysis was applied in order to extract the concept and terms for the empirical theory that describe the different factors influencing diversity reporting of the media in Macedonia. Four general questions were used during the interviews: (1) the manner in which the news production process took place in the newsrooms, (2) the manner in which two specific events from the recent past were covered, (3) the existing rules in newsrooms in relation to notion of diversity reporting and (4) the abilities and knowledge of journalists in this area. The research enabled us to understand and describe the context, processes and the most important factors in diversity reporting. In the following text, the empirical theory on diversity reporting in Macedonia is presented, which is based on data from the qualitative interviews. We point out to six most important factors that influence the process of diversity reporting in the media in Macedonia: (1) individual qualities, attitudes and professional beliefs of journalists and editors, (2) professional rules and codes of newsrooms; (3) structural and organizational characteristics of the media outlet, (4) impact of the market and audience, and (5) influence of the owners, political parties and the Government.

3. Individual characteristics, attitudes and beliefs of journalists

The influence of individual qualities, social status, personal experience and attitudes and beliefs of journalists and editors to the media contents are presented in various theoretical texts in details (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996: 72). This includes professional and ethical beliefs and attitudes that journalists and editors have in terms of their personal role in diversity reporting, such as whether they consider themselves as only neutral

transmitters of the actual events or they are active and responsible actors in the promotion of tolerance, cohesion and dialogue among the groups. Finally, in this group of factors competence and professional experience of journalists and editors on diversity reporting is also included.

Journalist's individual qualities (gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, education, religion) have a crucial impact on diversity reporting. For example, multiethnic newsrooms demonstrate larger sensitivity when reporting events related to inter-ethnic issues. Positive examples in this regard are the newsrooms of the daily newspaper *Vest* and the *Alsat M TV*. The editors and journalists of the daily *Vest* emphasize the big advantages of the multicultural newsrooms. "We have an Albanian journalist, a Turkish Editor....An ethnic Vlach who is an Assistant to the Editor...this is the spirit we cultivate in the newsroom...."⁴⁶

TV *Alsat M* was established as a multicultural newsroom addressing different audiences since its beginning: "We cover specific topics that are not daily events... we were awarded with the Jean Monnet prize for a multi-religious topic... Christian priest who spoke about Islam and an Imam that talked about Christianity...We work on these topics occasionally with an objective to introduce the communities to each other...the more they know about each other the less there will be misunderstandings."⁴⁷

On the other hand, stereotypes and prejudices towards members of other ethnic communities are more easily encouraged and nurtured when the newsroom is composed only of journalists from one ethnic community. For example, in the editorial board meetings discussions on how to report the events related to the building of the museum/church at the fortress in Skopje, some journalists expressed their personal pre-convictions on the inter-ethnic relations and coexistence in Macedonia, in the sense that "... we are too tolerant ... they go too far ... they demolish our churches ..." or "... we lost the war, so they can now devastate us, do whatever they want... make a federation or confederation ... a defeatist attitude, in the sense that we are losers ..."⁴⁸ Similar examples can be given for journalists working in the media in Albanian language: "We start from our beliefs and it cannot be denied that it affects the content of the newspaper ... our beliefs, of the majority of the editorial board, are that in our country Albanians are victims of politicians ... primarily of the Albanian politicians."⁴⁹

However, in a mono-ethnic newsroom the personal views and pre-convictions come to the fore only when the individual has the power in the media, i.e. when he plays a key role in the news production process. If the newsroom or the editors impose professional values and rules, stereotypes and prejudices of particular journalists will only be something that occurs incidentally. In terms of inter-ethnic relations in the country, in most of the media there is a dominance of the professional ethics and the awareness that the 2001 conflict events are already in the past, and should not happen again, therefore in the reporting on these issues "we should not add fuel to the fire because of publicity and a larger circulation...", because "...the consequences

46 Interview with Goran Mihajlovski, Editor in Chief of *Vest*, conducted on March 31st 2011.

47 Interview with Muhamed Zekiri, Editor in Chief of *Alsat M TV*, conducted on March 29th 2011.

48 Excerpts from the interviews with different participants.

The names are not mentioned due to their request for anonymity of some of the respondents.

49 Interview with an editor in a newspaper in Albanian language, who name is not mentioned due to the need to protect the anonymity of the respondent



might be big”, many things have been changed and “...there is no other choice except for coexistence and tolerance...”⁵⁰.

Most of the respondents in the interviews agree that there are more prejudices among journalists about sexual orientation, towards some marginalized groups and people with disabilities. There is no sufficient awareness that people are basically equal and it is reflected in the reporting on a more subtle level. There were also examples when particular journalists have even nurtured prejudices towards some marginalized groups and the gay community members. Such an example was the reporting of several newspapers on homosexual rights in Macedonia; however this is also done by some TV stations too.

Stereotypes in regard to the inter-ethnic issues are not only visible in the reporting for the two dominant communities, Macedonian and Albanian. An example for encouraging stereotypes is the coverage of the International Roma Day in Macedonia in the research period. On this occasion media only published pictures and stories that their life is miserable and desperate. “No media showed footage of Roma as successful in what he does ... I just heard on a radio that a Roma girl who graduated is employed ... If positive examples are infused it will change the attitudes, opinions and stereotypes among people.”⁵¹

The professional experience and competence of journalists shape their professional roles and ethical values. Journalists and editors have explained the professional and ethical crisis of the journalism in Macedonia during the interviews in more details. Despite the awareness on diversity and the complexity of these topics, still some of them consider themselves as only “transmitters” of the events and the facts from the reality. Due to several reasons, newsrooms are not committed at proactive and continuous reporting on these topics, there is a lot of passiveness, less stories that result from the journalist’s or editor’s initiative.

In regard to the competencies, there are different assessments. One group of journalists thinks that they are sufficiently empowered to report on these topics and they do not need additional trainings, while other group firmly says that “...the journalists in Macedonia are not sufficiently empowered to report neither for the everyday events nor for diversity...”

For all of these estimates, a statement of a journalist from television station at state level is very illustrative: “In general, I think there is no awareness of the professional standards and much less dedication to the profession. Newsrooms are full of uneducated journalists, easy to buy and biased. There are editors that protect certain views, especially political ones. The more journalism becomes a mercenary profession, the more the standards remain away.”⁵²

1. Internal professional rules and ethical codes

In the newsrooms with at least some (even unwritten) professional rules and values, the impact of the individual characteristics and personal attitudes, values and beliefs of journalists on diversity reporting is less obvious. Only a small portion of media outlets possess internal formally adopted documents which oblige them to respect the legal and ethical norms related to these issues. The public service broadcaster – Macedonian Radio Television – adopted a Declaration of professional and ethical principles in the program in 2003, which, amongst others, states that “the information presented by the

⁵⁰ Attitudes of several interviewed participants.

⁵¹ Interview with Ljubica Mangovska, manager of Tera TV from Bitola, conducted on April 18th 2011.

⁵² Interview with Ljubisa Arsic, journalist in Alfa TV, conducted on April 3th 2011.

public broadcaster should not be biased, while the facts and attitudes presented in the programs must be balanced and ethically appropriate.” Nova Makedonija daily has “a decision that calls upon the universal principles of the international and national law, the Constitution and specific laws ... which obliges the newspaper not to use a language that would insult other nationalities, fuel religious or national hatred ...”⁵³

Out of all print media, the three daily newspapers owned by MPM Macedonia had some sort of internal code in the period when they were owned by the German concern WAZ. There are no internal codes and rules in the other media, but it is emphasized that the principles of the Code of Journalists of Macedonia as well as the general principles of the professional journalistic reporting are respected when reporting on diversity.

At the level of the entire journalistic community, there is a polarization identified among the media of the different ethnic communities. Exceptions of this are only several media outlets, whose contents are intended for different audiences. However, in the media and the journalistic community there is such general polarization, same as living and working in parallel worlds. Stories for their own audiences are written, while the topics of interest to the audience of the other community are ignored, and these topics might help achieving a better understanding and a dialogue. The topics processed by the colleagues in the media of the ethnic communities are ignored, and when there are topics for same events the angle is completely different, as expected by the audience addressed by the media outlet. An example for this is the case of an Albanian woman, whose father and brother were killed by the Macedonian security forces in the region of Tetovo, during the 2001 conflict. A daily in Albanian language started investigating the story for the poor girl, who wished to study medicine, while being curious about the reasons for the impossibility to enroll at the University in Tetovo. With this topic “...we actually entered the Ohrid Agreement...which means its practical implementation in the practice...and we could see, by this simple example, that it is actually a farce.”⁵⁴

It is of concern that this division is also visible in the public service broadcaster MRT, which has a special duty to develop and stimulate the social cohesion. The interviewed editors themselves admit that the services in Macedonian language and in the languages of the ethnic communities operate in parallel, there is no exchange of information, neither joint contents that would be broadcasted in all services. “We are all closed in our own space, maybe because of lots of problems, unresolved issues...we have no technique, conditions and everyone is isolated around his own duties...if something appears it is incidental and it cannot be perceived as a cooperation at all.”⁵⁵

Positive examples are the newsrooms in the languages of the ethnic communities in the *Macedonian Radio Television* and the multilingual newsrooms of several commercial media, which are aware about the significance of cohesion and the need to cultivate mutual tolerance. Such an example is the newsroom of *Vest*, which tries to stimulate intercultural communication, although the newspaper format is a tabloid one with an emphasized commercial objective: “...two-three years ago, we decided to make recipes for the Eid-al-Adha holiday, lamb meat, baklava, etc. We did this and the newspaper was

53 Interview with Ratko Lazarovski, Manager of Nova Makedonija, conducted on March 18th 2011

54 Interview with an editor in Albanian language, whose name is not stated because of the need for anonymity.

55 Interview with a female editor in the informative program of the public service broadcaster, whose name is not published due to the need to guarantee anonymity.



sold out...the mutual tolerance is based on introduction to the customs and getting to know each other better, but also on the need to earn money because eventually if we do not have money we would go into conflict.”⁵⁶

Another positive example is the cooperation between *Dnevnik* and *Koha*, which lasted more than six months during the research period, when they were publishing same contents aimed for Albanian and Macedonian children. “It is a very good example of what these children will read, because they can talk about something tomorrow for which they have the same information, received by two different media outlets...in this way we try to offer the children a vision that they are the same.”⁵⁷

Similar example is *Tea Moderna*, weekly published in Macedonian and Albanian language. Editors seek the commonly produced contents to reach about 80 percents in the future, while the rest of 20 percents to become specific contents aimed for each audience separately.

Another positive practice of several newsrooms is that in the selectin of news for the day at least some positive exception is made when assessing that particular “negative news”, which might attract a large audience, can cause worsening of the inter-ethnic relations and therefore this information is often not published. A specific example for this is the explanation by one of the respondents: “We started an investigation for a religious building...in an area which is still turbulent. We have somewhat finished the story, but the Kale story appeared and...we stopped working on that investigative story because it would have had a chain effect that could worsen the situation.”⁵⁸

Worth mentioning are the examples of some of the local TV stations from the multi-ethnic areas. TV Menada’s newsroom is aware about the importance of these topics and has established cooperation with the civil society organizations that represent the interests of the people with disabilities. The editor of *Koha TV* emphasized that the media “... at local level report more on diversity in the direction of bringing people together, than it is done by the national television stations”⁵⁹ because the life in a multiethnic environment simply implies this. There are events everyday in which Roma, Turks, Macedonians and Albanians participate and the media try to reflect this diversity in a realistic way and without prejudices. For example, *Koha TV* recorded and broadcasted the guest visit of the drama group “Pralipe” at the Cultural Center. This TV station has also reported about the building of church in Recica, populated only with Albanian people.

Another positive example is the joint newsroom in Tetovo from 2002 until 2003 in which journalists Macedonians and Albanians worked on common topics related to the events in the region after the 2001 conflict.

Additional positive example highlighted in the interviews was the initiative of Tera TV from Bitola for a cooperation of the local media during the conflict in 2001, when journalists from the media in Bitola, Kumanovo and Tetovo jointly covered the events from these areas. Complex topics were processed during big changes in Macedonia on political and ethnic level and “...this experiment has proved to be a successfull one, because it showed how the events can be covered in an objective way and with a professional ethics...when several stories are processed in parallel and the views of different teams who are multiethnic can be seen.”⁶⁰

56 Interview with Goran Mihajlovski, Editor in Chief of Vest, conducted on March 31st 2011.

57 Interview with Lirim Dulovi, Editor in Chief of Koha, conducted on April 4th 2011

58 Interview with Ratko Lazarevski, Manager of Nova Makedonija, conducted on March 18th 2011.

59 Interview with Mevaip Abdiu, owner of Koha TV from Tetovo, conducted on April 21 2011.

60 Interview with Ljubica Mangovska, Manager of Tera TV from Bitola, conducted on April 18th 2011.

2. Structural and organizational features of the media

In order to be professional, sensitive and comprehensive, the reporting on different groups in the society, in its essence, involves investigative work by journalists, which requires professional competence, persistence, time, and also sufficient resources. But in the daily reporting of most electronic and print media in Macedonia journalism is under enormous pressure to meet deadlines. Daily news must be produced, and the journalist does not have the time available to process a topic. On the other hand, newsrooms lack material, technical and human resources. This means that news of diversity is competing for space or time, along with many other events, and their place in the daily schedule largely depends on the decisions of editors.

Some participants in the interviews consider the problem of time constraints can be overcome if there is a good organization in the newsroom: "In general, there is bad management in journalism ... from an editorial aspect, because in journalism you need to plan as well ... it is not enough to know how to write and cover an event ... but editors should be trained how to plan stories, themes ... this is the training we lack."⁶¹

This objective limitation on television could be compensated by planning topical news programs, where as an addition to the news profoundly covered information would be published. But in many commercial television stations it is an issue that owners and managers do not want to invest in investigative journalism, because it requires lots of resources.

According to several respondents interviewed, the biggest mistake of most editors is that they expect something to happen during the day and they do not plan in advance. But the editor in chief and news editors, as well as the program editors should have an idea as true journalism means to systematically monitor what is most interesting, is a burning issue in the current period and to plan consistently and on a long-term basis. The lack of investigative journalism is a problem also faced by the public service broadcaster MRT, which usually needs to provide more contents and time than the commercial media and to encourage in-depth reporting on various topics, because it is one of its key commitments. But the editors interviewed emphasize that the daily reporting is dominated with "... transferring of one's views, statements, announcements of events ... and investigative journalism does not work, especially in the daily reporting."⁶² Reasons for this lie in the lack of technical resources and people, especially in the programs of ethnic communities.

Moreover, the passivity of newsrooms is fueled by the growing number of Internet media in Macedonia which "... made overproduction of news that absolutely encourage our laziness ..."⁶³ Such passivity and lack of editorial effort hides a new threat, to leave professional standards behind and to deeply penetrate into what is called creating of another reality. "When nothing happens, they say ... let's improvise something, do something ... they would think something dramatic happened yesterday..."⁶⁴ Certain

61 Interview with Zoran Dimitrovski, Editor of Publika weekly, conducted on March 17th 2011.

62 Interview with a female editor of the informative program in the public service broadcaster, whose name is not published due to the need to guarantee anonymity.

63 Interview with Branko Gerovski, Editor in Chief in Spic, conducted on April 8th 2011.

64 Interview with a journalist in a daily, whose name is not published due to the need to guarantee anonymity.



journalists and editors with experience unfortunately have a “comfortable” position today, which consists of a little work and great income, which is a negative example for younger journalists. And then, “... if you are curious to know what they work, they instantly start shouting ... this is a political story ... and actually they do not work or are not in favor to push others to work.”⁶⁵

This group of factors includes what is called in journalism a process of selection of news, which is dominated by the views of journalists and editors of the news value of events, i.e. about the information worth publishing. Many previous studies (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Allan, 1999; van Dijk, 1988a; Gordon & Rosenberg, 1989) have shown that there are some general factors that affect the editorial decision in selecting events: the negativity and controversy of the event, the proximity and the time when the event occurred, the authority of actors, the conformability of the event with the public stereotypes and others. In this paper we will not analyze in details this aspect of the structural characteristics of the media, since it is a subject of a detailed review within the chapter on organizational principles and practices of the news production process.

The local TV stations that have current affairs programs somewhat differ from this general picture. This is probably a case because they focus on local issues; there are more initiatives to foster investigative approach in reporting on all topics, including diversity. Television stations in multiethnic environments such as Tetovo are an example for this, which tend to cover topics for both ethnic communities. For example, the editor of *Menada TV* highlights: “... we as editors in a Macedonian language newsroom cover topics for the lives of Albanians ... but attention is also devoted to the life of Roma and Serbs in Tetovo ... we simply live together, work together with colleagues from the Albanian language newsrooms ... what they recorded is broadcasted by us and vice versa...”⁶⁶

3. Influence by the market and the audience

The fact that most news (in the private media) is a commercial product also affects the distortion of the image of the reality they create. They are “forced” to service the audience a reality that attracts its attention, i.e. to serve it with what is currently “sold” on the market. This “commercial” pressure turns reporters into a kind of entertainers or “showmen” because the news has to be intriguing and cause emotions to retain the interest of the audience.

Under the pressure of the market, the journalist is obliged to find news that turn into headlines that sell the newspaper. It is well known that what sells is “sensationalist” news, regardless of the area it comes from. Therefore, journalists are forced to present all news, including those on diversity in a way that is intriguing and will awaken emotions among the audience, as well as news of a disaster, murder or a family drama. This tendency is most illustratively expressed in the following sentence by one of the interviewed editors: “... according to the editorial policy of the newspaper ... it should be something that is shocking and something to talk about, regardless if it is in the area of sports or politics ... for good or for bad, it has to shock and surprise the public, so that

⁶⁵ Interview with an editor in a daily newspaper, shoes name is not published due to the need to guarantee anonymity.

⁶⁶ Interview with Sanda Sibinovska, Editor in *Menada TV*, conducted on April 15th 2011

they can first buy and then talk about the product, because it remains in their mind and they will buy it the next day as well.”⁶⁷

Television news as a media product should also be successful at the market, otherwise the ratings of the media outlet can drastically be reduced, because they are one of the most popular and influential genres. And as with all other products at the market, their success also depends on demand, i.e. interests, expectations and trust of the audience. If it is known that television stations invest a lot of sources in the news, it is clear that the audience has a major impact on media reporting. The audience may not directly affect the opinions of journalists and editors on issues of diversity, but more likely the choice of topics and issues that should move to the daily schedule of the informative blocks in the program.

Even in most serious media tendencies to dramatize can be detected, which still should not be identified with vulgar sensationalism. This fine line can be easily crossed, which mostly depends on how editors and the newsroom as a whole will succeed to resist the commercial pressures of the market and the owner and to impose their view that the respect of the basic professional rules is decisively contributing to gain the trust of the audience, credibility of the media and, ultimately, its success at the market. Part of the commercial media are strongly committed to such a media ethics in the commercial work, despite the strong pressures at the market and the disturbed relations with the competition, emphasizing that regardless of the topic - business, politics or fashion models, and even for the topics most typical for a tabloid, relating to divorces, weddings, separations - journalists need to firmly adhere to professional principles. When such an attitude prevails and when this editorial position is accepted by the owner as a fundamental principle of the corporate ethics, then professionalism in the commercial work will be increasingly turning into a success story. In such newsrooms reporting on diversity is more responsive, designed and directed towards tolerance and cohesion of groups. The audiences, which belong to different cultural groups, will then easily recognize professionalism in that particular commercial media outlet, because it recognizes value in its content.

4. Influences by the owner, political parties and the Government

The fact that media construct the reality and reach a broad audience does not mean it is unnoticed by groups that want to achieve their personal or group goals. Such groups have been pushing hard on the media and influence the news production in order to win public opinion on any issue they support. In Macedonia, for many years now, it has been concluded that the situation in this respect is very bad. All possible impacts reflect to the media coverage: the owners, the Government, politicians and advertisers.

The interviewed journalists and editors themselves recognize the attempts for influence by the owners and the politicians: “... whatever others say, you cannot choose... everyone does that ... I have rejected three times to do what my owner liked ... and what can I say, after that three months of animosity, and I finally say to myself... well, it is your media outlet, you want such a news item, you get it ...”⁶⁸

Some are even more open in their interpretations and argue that “... journalists are strongly linked to political elites ... who literally dictate what must be done ... and they

67 Interview with Goran Mihajlovski, Editor in Chief of Vest, conducted on March 31st 2011.

68 Interview with an editor from a national TV, whose name is not published due to the need to guarantee anonymity.



see it black and white ... if it's good news and if it has to be put in the paper, then it would be covered with such a wafer that... the effect of the news will be reduced."⁶⁹

The responsibility for the low professional standards in reporting and for the lack of investigative journalism is often found in owners who do not invest enough resources in journalists and technical resources in their information desks. Cheapest journalism is favoured, because some owners do not realize that one journalist's crew will pass 200 kilometers to take a photograph of a heavy traffic accident, "... the media is not a socks factory... If they want to make a newspaper, i.e. to sell something for 10-15 denars then they shall produce a toilet paper ... no translators, journalists and proofreaders are needed for that, and the price for a roll of toilet paper and the newspaper is the same."⁷⁰

In some media positive initiatives by the owners can be identified. For example, a clear distinction is set in the daily Nova Makedonija between management and editorial staff, because the managers themselves recognize the economic interest of the professional work of the media. "The investor has the responsibility to provide all the conditions for journalists ... during the establishment of the media itself a distinction must be made about its role and how far it would go ... and when the media outlet starts working ... the director cannot enter into the role of an editor or an editor in chief or to transmit the wishes of the external factors, centres of power and influence, whether they are economic, political, party, whatever..."⁷¹ In addition, journalists are provided a legal protection if someone initiates a lawsuit for defamation, insult or other infringement of somebody's individual right in the reporting.

In terms of impact of Government and political parties on the media, almost all respondents answered similarly. Some of the editors interviewed in the public service broadcaster even openly admitted that the public service is under the influence of the party in power for many years.

Today in the public service "... the unwritten principle is generally respected to be on the side of the Government ... to be honest, I do not know where exactly these instructions come from, but what I notice ... is a black and white world, two political parties are reported about ... there are political parties that have no access to the public service and we do not inform about them."⁷² Some of the editors of the public service even do not have a dilemma on how it should be reported: "... each media outlet has its own point of view ... We are a public service, which means that the biggest factor for us is the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, the way it sees things, therefore usually we go in that direction ... it does not mean that we do not criticize the Government ... but of course these criticisms are not that mean, but well-meaning, connected with facts ..."⁷³

Political influence on the media is reflected in diversity reporting as well, because "...the media that are associated with the ruling parties report in different way about the same event compared with the media that are not associated with the Government..."⁷⁴ Very often, when these topics are reported, they are framed in a political context because of the dominant political influences over the media, which are party-politically divided and polarized as never

69 Interview with a journalist from a daily newspaper, whose name is not published due to the need to guarantee anonymity.

70 Ibid.

71 Interview with Ratko Lazarevski, Manager of Nova Makedonija, conducted on March 18th 2011.

72 Interview with an editor in the public service, whose name is not published due to the need to guarantee anonymity.

73 Interview with an editor in the public service, whose name is not published due to the need to guarantee anonymity.

74 Interview with Muhamed Zekiri, Editor in Chief of Alsat M TV, conducted on March 29th 2011.

before. An example for the framing of inter-ethnic topics in the dominant political discourse between the Government and the opposition is the event on Kale. “What happened at the Kale fortress is ...a reflection of the political situation in our country...we talked more about who is behind the event, whether it is VMRO-DPMNE or SDSM?”⁷⁵

5. Conclusion

Anyone who is interested in reporting of diversity and its promotion in a multicultural society such as the Macedonian should take into account the factors that affect the process of news production. The five main factors identified in this study are the following ones: structural and organizational characteristics of the media outlet, individual characteristics, attitudes and beliefs of journalists and editors, professional rules and codes of the newsrooms; impacts of market and audience, and the impact of owners, Government and political parties.

The model presented simply represents the factors that affect media reporting on diversity in Macedonia. In reality the relations among the different factors are more complex and intertwined. For example, the expectations of the audience and the editorial strategies are not one-way. The audience with its habits and preferences is really a factor of influence on the agenda of the commercial media, but the media themselves influence the shaping of public opinion, both with the content and the form of reporting. However, even in this simplified form, the model can help to understand the complex relationships and processes that take place during diversity reporting in the newsroom. Understanding these interlocking relationships is crucial if we try to influence the improvement of the final product of the news production - a media content that is related to various social and cultural groups.

The analysis of each factor can help researchers and practitioners to develop clear strategies and suggestions in order to overcome various obstacles and problems in the reporting of such sensitive issues. For the very beginning, it might be: preparation and publication of detailed guidelines on sensitive and careful reporting on different social and cultural groups, developing professional skills and knowledge of journalists and editors, education of journalism students and young journalists on diversity reporting diversity.

In addition to the problems that the Macedonian journalism faces, the analysis has also identified positive initiatives and examples of mutual cooperation among media of different communities, especially in the areas inhabited by different communities. The positive spirit of cooperation and unity fostered in the multilingual newsrooms of several media addressing different ethnic communities contribute to changing the deep-rooted stereotypes and helps enriching dialogue and understanding.

Finally, such an empirical study imposed a series of new questions. How to apply the general principles of diversity reporting in specific structures, procedures and cultures of the Macedonian media? How diversity topics should find their place in the politicized public agenda of the Macedonian media? How to develop initiatives to support cultural pluralism and professional reporting on diversity through the instruments of the media policy and through the professional associations of journalists and the media?

75 Interview with Zoran Dimitrovski, Editor in Publika weekly, conducted on March 17th 2011



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ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES IN THE PROCESS OF NEWS PRODUCTION

*Elena Petreska**

1. Introduction

The dominant view in Europe and in all modern democratic societies is that media play an important role in society, especially because of the relationship between media and democracy. Organizational principles and practices in newsrooms are important because they affect the social reality reflected by the media. Sociologists like Molotch and Lester (Molotch & Lester, 1974: 101-112) argue that there is no news waiting to be released, but there are only circumstances that the media or the sources of information promote into “events”. Therefore, to understand what news is, there should be an understanding about the process of its production.

The term production and technology of news describes the process and the methods that are required to produce and distribute the journalistic contents to the audience. A content that is published in the print and electronic media, especially in their news programs, is directly dependent on the organizational principles and practices in the newsrooms. Therefore, it is important to pay attention not only to the production process of the news media in Macedonia, but also to the factors that influence the choice of information, criteria for publishing and the assessment of the “value”, as well as the journalistic standards. The text to follow provides a comprehensive picture of the organizational principles in the Macedonian media, i.e. the manner of selecting, processing and publishing of news in print and electronic media, as well as the conditions to develop an investigative journalism in the country.

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2. Method

The text of the research is structured on the basis of the 28 qualitative interviews with editors and journalists from several print and electronic media in Macedonia, conducted in March and April 2011. It is certainly associated with previous research on various aspects of the news production process. The empirical basis for the process of news production, the newsroom practices and skills and the assessment of the news' values results from the qualitative content analysis of the interviews. Subject of analysis were the responses by the editors and journalists to the questions asked about the newsroom's procedures, the process of news production, the current rules of reporting as well as for the skills and the knowledge of the employees in the media.

2.1. Structure of the text

In the following parts of the text the process of news production in the Macedonian media is described, their organizational principles and practices as well as the existing newsrooms' rules and practices of reporting are analyzed. By reviewing the current gaps and areas where there is room to intervene, this study also offers recommendations for improving the current situation. The conclusions are drawn on the basis of the research results.

2.2 Process of news production

The process of news production consists of many routines, practices and organizational constraints that influence the content and the forms of information published. Given that both print and electronic media in Macedonia are organized as companies, the principle of **hierarchical setup of the employees in the newsrooms** is valid, while the editors and media management staff hold the key power.

The newsrooms hold daily staff meetings, where they agree on the selection of events and topics to be covered and on the fashion of reporting. The role of journalists is reduced to daily reporting on particular events and developments and usually each of them is specialized in particular areas. Print media are different from the electronic media in terms of technology used for collection, preparation and transmission of information (Shoemaker, 1996: 121). Television stations usually have more reporters than the newspapers, where there is no need of a technology in collecting and processing of information.

Interviews conducted with editors and journalists have confirmed that when it comes to **technical and technological equipment and human resources in newsrooms, the media in Macedonia are at a low level of development**. This especially applies to electronic media, where the production involves complex journalistic and production operation. The poor equipment in a technical sense, the inability to cover events due to the lack of proper equipment and the understaffing are seen by most of the journalists and editors as a reason for the poor motivation for a proactive and investigative journalism: *"If the right conditions are provided, we can certainly do more, by expanding the number of reporters, TV crews ... If we had more teams, I think we would cover all events,"*⁶⁷ a television editor said.

There is no dispute that the routines of news production and the reporting formats adopted are influenced by the **editorial policy of the particular media outlet** (Gans, 1979). Boyd emphasized that the decisions on the selection of news and the priority given to the information is something that depends on the editors, who make decisions based on their experience and intuition (Boyd, 1994).

This approach is also confirmed by the interviewed journalists: *“The editorial policy is usually shaped by the editor in chief and the other editors who evaluate the relevant news and after discussions on these events a decision is made on what is to be covered in the news.”*⁷⁶

However, editors, in general, are not those that have an undisputable right to shape the editorial policy.

The analysis of the interviews conducted, more or less, confirms that the editors are having the role of implementers, since the editorial policy is created on the basis of the current affiliation of the media outlet, i.e. of its owner or management to any political or business group. In such circumstances, the role of editors is more reduced to formatting the information content and planning the schedule of the pages or the order of the contents in the news programs: *“In general, there is a problem in the media that arises from the state’s attitude towards them, and that is related with the fact that there is censorship in a number of media, journalists have low wages, they are not satisfied with the working conditions, with the manner in which the media owners manage the daily politics, i.e. the relations between the Government and the opposition. In such circumstances there is apathy in journalism, especially on the side of younger journalists, because they cannot express themselves.”*⁷⁷

In fact, editors are in the middle between the management of the media and journalists, i.e. they try to maintain the professional standards in the marketing-oriented environment. Fancher claims that the editor is responsible for the functioning of the media body, by saying that: *“... despite the editorship, he also needs to manage people, systems and resources”* (Fancher, 1987: 73).

In circumstances when the media are under pressure or are committed to represent a political statement or an option, the role of the editors is even more complicated - they are the “guardians” of the information that flows to the public, decide what will be published and what does not, and provide a biased angle to the stories, defined in compliance with the editorial policy of the particular media outlet. Therefore, their ethical and moral qualities are of particular importance, as well as the skills to create an “independent” journalistic product despite the internal and the external political influences: *“The editor has the undeniable right to form the skeleton ... That is why he puts his signature at the end and takes over the responsibility.”*⁷⁸

The role of the editors as “gate keepers of information” is particularly evident when reporting on sensitive topics. There are positive measures undertaken by part of the editors interviewed, when their fellow journalists reported on delicate event:

“...I appeared at work in person to be sure that nothing will get out of control... I went on field together with the reporters, although this is not done by everyone, but I es-

76 Quote from an interview with Mevaip Abdiu, editor in Koha TV, Tetovo, conducted on April 21 2011.

77 Quote from an interview with Bardul Zajmi, ALB TV, conducted on April 19th 2011.

78 Quote from an interview with a TV editor, whose name is not published due to the need to guarantee anonymity.



timated that it would be good to be there, to see what happens and give guidance from the scene on how to proceed further.”⁷⁹ In connection to this, the editor of another media outlet says: “The journalist, consciously or not, published one-sided text ... I reacted and revoked the text, talked with the journalist and asked him to rewrite it.”⁸⁰

Unlike editors, journalists-reporters have little impact on the contents to be offered to the audience, although they are free to expose their ideas at the the daily editorial meetings. “They can express their own point of view only if it coincides with the views of the editor”⁸¹, a television journalist stated. Out of the interviews conducted, it could be perceived that the rejection of reporter’s proposals to process certain topics results with an inertia in the reporter’s work on a long-term basis: “The editor cannot impose something that you do not want to work on, something you consider inappropriate ... Journalists are under pressure in the last 6-7 months”⁸², one of the interviewed journalists said.

According to Hallin (Hallin, 1992: 14-25), many journalists have accepted the bureaucratic procedures of the newsrooms and their corresponding routines. According to this assertion, they even less complain to the intervention of the editors in their stories and have accepted the professional limits.

Talking about the manner of reporting, many journalists in Macedonia admit that they often expose themselves to **self-censorship**: “The journalist decides about the angle of the analytical themes himself ... And now, if by any chance, something strikes in the eye of the editor, let us say a political connotation, a problem can arise... Maybe we all have some sort of self-censorship because we work here for many years now and we know what might get us into trouble.”⁸³ Self-censorship is especially obvious among reporters in the public service broadcaster: “We mostly report about the Government, Government’s policies ... The angle of reporting is well known to all journalists and somehow they know their work, and it is unnecessary to explain to them how they should write their reports.”⁸⁴ Only a small part of those who were interviewed argue that journalists have a complete freedom to produce information and determine the angle in the reporting: “Everyone has his own point of view, everyone is subjective, there is no objective view of the reality ... If I need to say what should be the angle, I will write the text myself.”⁸⁵

2.3 Criteria for the news’ value

The value of the news determines the importance of the information published and the level of attention to be paid to the audience. **The principle of reporting in the newsrooms is reduced to three general questions: what is acceptable for the audience, whether there are sources that will verify the information and whether the media outlet can process the information in an organizational sense.** The criteria for evaluation of information are not universal, and “... journalism has a wide range of values established

79 Quote from an interview with Marjan Nikolovski, journalist from Sitel TV, conducted on April 25th 2011.

80 Quote from an interview with Muhamed Zekiri, editor in chief in Alsat TV, conducted on March 29th 2011.

81 Quote from an interview with Kole Casule, Editor in Chief in the newspaper Vreme, conducted on March 31st 2011.

82 Quote from an interview with a TV journalist, whose name is not published due to the need to guarantee anonymity.

83 Quote from an interview with a TV journalist, whose name is not published due to the need to guarantee anonymity.

84 Quote from an interview with a female radio journalist in the public service broadcaster,

whose name is not published due to the need to guarantee anonymity.

85 Quote from an interview with Zoran Andonovski, Editor in Chief of Nova Makedonija, conducted on March 30th 2011.

that are different in different cultures” (Boyd, 1994). According to the former editor of the USA Times Harold Evans (1972), the news is worth publishing in case of necessary information or unusual events, when it is based on facts and when it is impartial and free from personal feelings of the journalist.

The journalists and editors interviewed think that the selection of information that is reported on a daily basis depends on numerous factors than what is included in this simple definition. It is positive that almost everyone claims that while reporting the **public interest** is taken into consideration. The newsrooms are increasingly becoming open for the audience’s feedback and they accept those values of the news that attract the audience: *“We are led by the audience we address, if the news concerns large number of viewers or if it has a social significance which could influence the processes in the society in one direction or another”*⁸⁶; *“There are topics of interest for particular companies, such as the earnings a bank has from a provision. This is going to be of interest for the banks, but what about our readers?”*⁸⁷, an editor of a print media outlet explained. The interview participants claim that **political and economic developments are something that attracts the audience most of all**, which is the reason for the priority given to these topics in the informative contents: *“We insist on diversity, but politics and political developments unfortunately dominate”*⁸⁸; *“Politics and economy dominate the news in our newspaper... Topics related to health appear from time to time because there are some ongoing affairs, but politics and economy is what we have every day...”*⁸⁹

Media often serve so-called spontaneous news (murders, fires, etc.), as well as contents that is agreed by the newsroom (if majority of the journalists think that a particular event, phenomenon or a development attracts the attention and it is important for the social environment or if some phenomenon or a problem has to be publicly exposed). This, amongst others, depends on the relevance and proximity of the event, of those who are concerned with it, whether it is sufficiently informative, controversial, positive or negative. On the other hand, some media focus at the local developments while reporting and some of them seek sensationalism. Interestingly, one of the editors interviewed describes the evaluation of news in the following way: *“This should be something shocking, something that will be discussed further, regardless if it is in the area of sports or politics. For good or bad, it is important that it should shock and surprise the public”*⁹⁰.

As result of the analysis of the interviews it was noticed that **a specific manner of reporting is practiced in the radio and TV news programmes of the public service broadcaster that is led by specific unwritten rules** when identifying the priority of information, regardless of the news value or the public interest: *“There is some protocol followed here, the President is at the first place, then the Prime Minister, the President of the Assembly, if all of them are present the same day.”*⁹¹

Compared to the public service broadcaster, the editors and journalists in most of the **commercial media clearly view things through the logic of the “market” competi-**

86 Quote from an interview with Mladen Cadikovski, Editor in Chief of A1 TV, conducted on April 8th 2011

87 Quote from an interview with Kole Casule, Editor in Chief of the Vreme daily, conducted on March 31st 2011

88 Quote from an interview with Dimce Veljanovski, Editor in the Macedonian Radio Television, conducted on April 18th 2011.

89 Quote from an interview with Zoran Dimitrovski, Editor in Publika weekly, conducted on March 17th 2011.

90 Quote from an interview with Goran Mihajlovski, Editor in Chief of the Vest daily, conducted on March 31st 2011.

91 Quote from an interview with a female radio journalist in the public service broadcaster, whose name is not published due to the need to guarantee anonymity.



tion: “We are focused on what will sell the newspaper tomorrow and we have learned to think that way, why would anyone give 15 denars and buy our newspaper.”⁹²

There are particular differences in comparison to the way **local media** are reporting on issues. Given the fact that they are not obliged to report on the developments at a state level, they have a larger initiative for an investigative approach in the reporting of different topics. A positive example is mentioned by a female editor of a local TV station, who claims that their reporting is primarily focused at the **everyday life and highlighting of positive social examples**: “It is a decision we make in the moment, depending on the climate, the day itself. It might seem as a trivial topic. We think that we could cover topics in the area of culture, which are less presented in the informative programs, such as a theatre play that attracted a great attention by the audience.”⁹³

Many external and internal factors affect the decisions of journalists on the events and topics to be covered in the media, the manner of interpretation of those events and the significance given to them. The newsrooms’ criteria on the importance of information are devalued by the fact that the media are often forced to place topics that are not motivated by the news value, but are “ordered” by the media management staff, the owners, sources of information from particular centres of political and state power or the companies, banks or other “sponsors” that finance that particular media.

Journalists and editors witness that they succumb under that pressure: “All media outlets in Macedonia presently have some political agenda and journalists, willingly or not, are part of that political agenda. By and large, it is an issue of survival and I think that in this case the situation is hopeless”⁹⁴, an editor from an electronic media outlet claims. Especially negative is the practice identified in the public service broadcaster MRT, where due to the mode of financing - tax and budget sources - there is an obligation to publish all political developments, especially the activities of the Government, regardless of the news value: “All possible news in the daily politics is covered. It is compulsory to publish them.”⁹⁵

The inclination of media towards particular political or economic elites discloses the issue of **biased reporting**. McQuail (McQuail, 1992: 191) defines bias as “a constant tendency to move out of the way of objective truth to the left or right, or tendency to favour one side at the expense of other”. The same author (McQuail, 1992: 193-194) states a typology of political bias in the news, depending if it is open or hidden, intentional or not.

The alarming fact is that most of the journalists and editors interviewed in Macedonia admit that there is an obvious and open political inclination in the media reporting: “The newsrooms are full of uneducated journalists, easy to buy or biased, editors that protect particular attitudes, especially political ones. The more the journalism becomes a mercenary profession the more the standards are far behind”.⁹⁶

It is noticed that the relationship between media and politics led to **serious polarization in the reporting practice**. For instance, different media interpret the same event in completely different ways, aiming to emphasize or hide particular aspects of it. Parti-

92 Quote from an interview with Goran Mihajlovski, Editor in Chief in the Vest daily, conducted on March 31st 2011.

93 Quote from an interview with Sandra Sribinovska, Editor in Chief of Menada TV in Tetovo, conducted on April 14th 2011.

94 Quote from an interview with a TV editor, whose name is not published due to the need to guarantee anonymity.

95 Quote from an interview with a female editor of an informative programme in the public service broadcaster, whose name is not published due to the need to guarantee anonymity.

96 Quote from an interview with Ljubisa Arsic, journalist from Alfa TV, conducted on April 18th 2011.

pants in the research say that particular staged events are given greater importance than the realistic ones and, on the other hand, some events are completely ignored, although those are topics of high societal significance. An interesting example is the one provided by a TV editor: *“The press-conferences of all political parties are not covered, only those that are considered as relevant ones. For instance, when it comes to the news that is not published, we do not cover the case**** because we have assessed that it is related with spin...which we should not support and do not give in to it”*.⁹⁷

Another negative trend, which is particularly obvious in the print media, is the priority given to the **pre-arranged topics and the construction of a reality within the reporting practice**. Journalists say that it happens when the daily events are not sufficiently attractive to define the focus in the news programme edition: *“When there is nothing going on, they (the editors) let us make up things and I judge about this as a construction of a reality to a large extent...And when someone reads about it he thinks that something dramatic happened yesterday which caused some changes.”*⁹⁸

It is also noticed that often, when reporters attend a number of events that could be processed into comprehensive topics, they are only focused at one aspect of the story, which is planned in advance: *“We use the events not because of the message that should be sent across to the public, but primarily because of the political mainstream. If you have an issue, such as the Law on High Education when the Minister is the main actor to be heard about the topic, and not the event, it is not of our interest.”*⁹⁹ In some interview participants’ view, this problem can be overcome by undertaking a more serious editorial approach in the processing of topics, but also by improving the material, technical and human resources in the newsrooms.

3. Sources of information and forms of information publishing

From the interviews conducted with the journalists and editors we can conclude that the information obtained from the news agencies, journalists’ personal contacts with people of different profiles, the press-conferences, briefings, as well as testimonials, are the main sources of information that journalists use in their reporting. However, editors and journalists emphasize the need of caution when reporting and the need to check information, since their sources try to manipulate the journalists sometimes. It is a positive fact that **most of the interviewed media representatives claim they publish only reliable information**. This is most obvious in the public service broadcaster, although these rules are also respected by a large portion of the private media outlets. *“We should not publish speculations or information that is not checked and is of high interest to the public. That is why some say that we are not attractive and, on the other hand, we get reactions that we respect principles and do not publish information that is not accurate.”*¹⁰⁰

The risk of publishing unreliable information is discussed by an editor from a print media: *“If we have sources that have been proven not to have been manipulative in the*

97 Quote from an interview with a TV editor, whose name is not published due to the need to guarantee anonymity.

98 Quote from an interview with a daily newspaper editor, whose name is not published due to the need to guarantee anonymity.

99 Quote from an interview with a TV editor, whose name is not published due to the need to guarantee anonymity.

100 Quote from an interview with a TV editor in the public service broadcaster, whose name is not published due to the need to guarantee anonymity.



*past, then we proceed with publishing of the information, but if our source is from a political party, then we are aware that a manipulation is likely. Therefore we think it is better not to have any news than to make a mistake..."*¹⁰¹

The newsroom of the "Vest" daily has a positive practice of publishing information about the private lives of public figures, which causes a large interest among readers. However, information is published under strictly defined rules. "We have so far divorced and married the Prime Minister again;, all this with their knowledge while protecting their privacy. Over time they figured out it was better to have the information under control, than to have something published which cannot be controlled. And we have been always fair."¹⁰² The need to verify information to be published is crucial because it contributes to the quality of informing, fostering of journalistic ethics and gaining the trust of the audience.

The analysis of the interviews on the relation between issues concerning the capital of the country and the periphery has identified a worrying asymmetry because the media in Macedonia give very little importance to the **correspondents, who report from the field in their local community, i.e .from an extraordinary or a particularly important event.** Although journalists - correspondents are of great importance for each newsroom, the Macedonian media rarely employ them. Certain media have correspondents in major cities of the country, but it is very disappointing that such a practice is dying often due to the limited financial resources: "Unfortunately, up until 5 or 6 years ago we had a network of correspondents across the country and we had a rich stream of information on the developments from everywhere, literally, from villages, cities and regions in the country. This network of correspondents slowly died and only some correspondents are still active..."¹⁰³

None of the media in Macedonia, including the MRT as a public service broadcaster, has developed a quality network of correspondents abroad. At the time of the research, MIA and MRT still did not have correspondents in Washington, Brussels or in the neighbouring countries. At present Macedonian journalists who live in those countries for a long time or work freelance in major centres in Europe are temporarily contracted. Overall, Macedonian media cover the world events from agency sources, which also represents a problem because the media cannot or are not willing to pay for a foreign news service.

The events overseas are given very little importance in the reporting and sometimes, due to time constraints of the news programs, they are totally excluded. "*In percentage terms, I think 60-70% of the news is local, 20% national and 10% are world news,*" a programme editor of a local television explains. This situation enables the audience to get only a superficial and limited access to quality information on regional, European and global developments and national events dominate the reporting.

The forms of information publishing depend on the type of the media outlet, as well as on the time and spatial opportunities for placement of news content. The information content of the electronic media is often published in a form of news items, brief news and interviews, for which decisions are made by the newsroom editorial staff.

101 Quote from an interview with an editor of a daily newspaper, whose name is not published due to the need to guarantee anonymity.

102 Quote from an interview with Goran Mihajlovski, Editor in Chief of the Vest daily, conducted on March 31st 2011.

103 Quote from an interview with Valentina Novkovska Trajkovska, Editor in the Macedonian Radio conducted on April 20th 2011.

Only some media have nonstandard practice of extended processing of information, by producing news programs from different areas (health, politics, economy, and judiciary). On the other hand, print media provide a significant space for photographs by their own photoreporters or from agency sources. To some media they are often worth more than the written words: “According to our concept, the front page always has to have a large photograph. Sometimes we publish photos with a headline only, while sometimes we cannot publish a priority topic at the front page just because we do not have a photo.”¹⁰⁴

4. Proactive, reactive and investigative journalism in the Macedonian media

One of the most important journalistic principles is the identification of phenomena and the analysis of potential consequences for society. However it is a fact in the modern Macedonian society that journalism has lost this role and focused itself to a reactive coverage of the events, i.e. it committed itself to reporting of the events after they occur and not before that. Many of the journalists and editors interviewed agree that in the information desks of the Macedonian media **the reactive journalism dominates at the expense of proactive journalism.**

The main reason is the pressure for reporting on daily topics, and the time constraints that media face in the everyday reporting. While recognizing the importance of the original themes that create the media visibility, the interviewed editors and journalists argue that they support proactive journalism as long as conditions allow them to do so: “Basically, we do not only cover daily events, but as much as possible we initiate topics ourselves. The themes are more attractive and attract viewers. They are more interested to see something unique, rather than what they see on all televisions...”¹⁰⁵

Participants in the interviews believe that additional reason for the lack of proactive reporting is the **insufficient professional competence of many journalists.** “I think that many journalists are uneducated, with poor reading habits, they are insufficiently prepared. Many of them prepare interviews without knowing the person they will be talking with, they do not have sufficient information about the topic they treat and they do not know the topic ... Often journalists rely on information they they are provided with by others.”¹⁰⁶

The limited material, technical and human resources in the newsroom, according to the interview participants, are a reason for the **lack of investigative approach in the media reporting in Macedonia.**

Ettema and Glasser (1998), as well as De Burgh (2008) think that the role of the investigative journalist is to put an emphasis and provide attention to the social irregularities and injustices, to publish information that is of public interest and to encourage legal reforms. The lack of investigative journalism in Macedonia, according to the interview participants, is most of all result of the financial problems faced by the newsrooms: “The newsrooms cannot afford to allocate sources for investigative journalism. It is much easier and less expensive to focus on daily journalism. This is less expensive than to let

104 Quote from an interview with Kole Casule, Editor in Chief in Vreme, conducted on March 31st 2011.

105 Quote from an interview with Muhamed Zekiri, Editor in Chief from Alsat TV, conducted on April 29th 2011

106 Quote from an interview with Predrag Petrovic, Editor in A1 TV, conducted on April 12th 2011.



*the journalist investigate and focus at one topic only, for example, for a period of one week*¹⁰⁷, one of the interviewed editors said.

Another trend that negatively affects the insufficient engagement of journalists when it comes to proactive and investigative journalism is the **primary use of news and other contents from the news agencies**. “It is an issue that we have Internet media in Macedonia that put a pressure over us; they offer a hyper – production of news which absolutely encourages our laziness to use them”¹⁰⁸ an editor from a print media says. While being critical towards the editorial management, journalists think that an additional education is required for the editors: “It is not sufficient to know how to write and cover an event...instead editors should be educated on skills to plan stories and topics... this training is what we lack.”¹⁰⁹

5. Conclusion

In the era of globalization, amid information hyper - production and the dramatic increase of availability to different media, the quality of information is of paramount importance so that the audience can get a clear picture of current events and social reality. To understand how the complex media structure and editorial practices reflect the way of reporting and influence the quality of media contents offered to the public, it is necessary to thoroughly know the editorial practices. The analysis of interviews on the organizational principles and practices enabled us to identify **a sequence of positive practices in the reporting, but also many disadvantages**: starting from a journalistic unprofessionalism to partial distortion of the social reality.

As for the positive practices reflected by the analysis, it is of crucial importance that **the reporting in the Macedonian media is generally guided by the interests of the audience**. The research has also confirmed that the national and local media are aware of their social role and that they develop their principles of reporting based on this. Hence, the local media focus at community problems and the interest of citizens, while the national media reflect the situation on national level in different ways. It is indicative that **large part of the media outlets claim they do not publish unreliable information**; instead they are guided by the professional principles in the publishing of news. Still, there is a **lack of more comprehensive information that refers to the global developments**. The primary reporting on local developments and the lack of correspondence from abroad gives the public a superficial and limited access to world events and trends, which highlights the need in the print and electronic media to invest in a serious network of correspondents abroad, as well as in regular access to foreign information services and their active engagement – based on the principle of exchange of information or programs - in placing information from Macedonia in Europe and worldwide.

One of the biggest problems faced by the Macedonian journalism is the dominant influence of politics as well as the influence of particular centres of economic power which impose their interests. The entire informative product by most of the media often contains information that is published based on the influence by personal attitudes of

107 Quote from an interview with Muhamed Zekiri, Editor in Chief of Alsat TV, conducted on March 29th 2011

108 Quote from an interview with an editor from a daily whose name is not published due to the need to guarantee anonymity.

109 Quote from an interview with Zoran Dimitrovski, Editor in Publika weekly, conducted on March 17th 2011

the editors, the editorial opinions, but also contents that do not satisfy the general criteria for newsworthiness. One of the reasons for this, based on the research conducted, is the **limited role of editors and journalists** in relation to the hierarchical setup of the media. Most editors are more or less placed in the role of implementers, since they are being forced to develop the editorial policy and determine the angle of reporting based on the immediate inclination of the owner or the management of media to any political or business group. **The role of journalists, however, is often limited to the daily routine of task implementation.** As result of the interviews, it is of concern that the continuous reporting not being immune to some influences results with frequent examples of **self-censorship among journalists**, which is equally prevalent in both the public service and the commercial media. The analysis has confirmed that the journalistic community and the media industry wider are helpless in this situation, given that the main reason is only located in the unfair media competition and the lack of established rules in the media space. The development of appropriate self-regulating mechanisms in the media sphere and legal mechanisms that would protect journalists' rights would significantly hinder the "gladiator forms" of unfair competition in the media sphere, they would stand in defence of the journalistic freedom, thereby contributing to improving the quality of reporting in the Macedonian media.

The research has also shown that **the daily routines in the newsrooms, as well as the limited financial, technical and human resources in the media are the main reason for the lack of proactive and investigative journalism.** However, it is positive that editors are aware of the importance of the original themes that create media recognition and therefore they encourage journalists to use a proactive approach and investigation as long as conditions allow. Investment into an investigative journalism would significantly improve the quality of media reporting, encourage critical mass towards the negative social trends in the country and contribute to solving problems of public interest.

The interviews with the editors and reporters raised more doubts about the solving of serious problems faced by the Macedonian media. Considering the importance of freedom of expression in a democratically oriented environment, the research has shown that the current situation in this area is not only a problem of the journalistic profession, but it is also reflected in the broader social context. Therefore, solving of problems is a process that requires active involvement and commitment not only by the media workers, but also from all relevant and interested stakeholders.



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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SOCIAL NETWORKS AND DIVERSITY

*Eleonora Serafimovska**

1. New social information-communication structure

New roads have been built and are being built in the society with tremendous speed and we barely notice. These roads are the new infrastructure of information and communication. Obviously, they are part of a new digital reality, but we will be able to notice them only at the point when yet another wire will 'run up' in our homes. At the same time, we do not realize that they make us dependent on yet another technology in our life. (Van Dijk, 2006: 16)

Modern literature abounds in expressions like "we live in world of interconnectedness", "human web" and "web-society". At first glance this seems unusual, because at the same time a lot is being said about individualization, social fragmentation, independence, freedom, etc. When thinking the issue through again, this coincidence does not look that unusual since both tendencies could actually be two sides of the same coin. „The world have never been freer but it has never even been so interdependent and interconnected“ (Mulgan, 1997: 65).

On an individual level, the use of networks has grown to dominate human lives. Considering the time spent in electronic networks, telephony and on Internet, experts estimate an average of five to seven hours of free time per day for an individual in a developed society. Some experts consider that the individualization and smaller households, full of technology trying to make people less dependent on each other, still did not make them less social human beings.

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With a slight exaggeration, XX century can be called the era of networks. The new media such as social networks gain even greater impact on all social and private life of people. In this sense, the term “information highway” is truly adequate. The design of this basic infrastructure is of crucial importance for the opportunities and risks that occur during the online networking. Potential consequences from the selection of a certain type of communication infrastructure and its integration in one’s social and personal life – can be less visible but even as such – they will not be less serious.

Pursuing this line of arguments, “the game” involves not only the ecology of the nature – the fact that the transport of information and communication will partially replace the transport of goods and people – but also the “social ecology”. Therefore, when the new media arrived in the 1980’s, some people were arguing that they polluted the social environment since they penetrate even the private sphere. According to most radical critics of that time, the new media reduced, diminished and even destroyed the quality of communication face-to-face and made professional relations more formal (Kubicek, 1988). Such changes, as assumed, will result with reduction of privacy and total control „from the top”.

In the 1990’s these attitudes were replaced by utopian views of new media: that they would significantly increase the quality of life and, particularly, the quality of communication. „Debates on this topic continue, whereas considerations about social ecology, ‘new economy’ and the new era of prosperity, freedom and online democracy cannot get off the stage.” (van Dijk, 1991:92). The use of social networks explodes with its popularity in the last decade, as a tool primarily for the young people to multiply the flow of information and mutual communication. One of the most popular websites is Facebook, which was originally created as a forum of students of American universities and today it is being used by people of all ages and geographic latitudes. Its popularity was originally supported by the pupils’ perception, students and other young people that this is something “private”, a forum with limited access for those who are not enrolled in college or university. Thus, users of the page felt relatively free to post personal information about them and their social lives, understanding it as a way to attract and develop relations with peers.

But shortly after its creation, the form and the functioning of Facebook changed, thus questions were raised about the usage and adequacy of information on it by others that are not students, and that the use of it can lead to decisions that may negatively impact the student population. For example, many colleges and universities suspended students that posted racially-threatening or sexually-inadequate information on their Facebook profiles. Since then, there have been constant debates on potential disturbing impact that social networks may have. That is why Facebook will be in the spotlight of the analysis of this research also, which is focused on the psychology of the social networks and diversity.

2. Cyber-space as psychological space

The term “cyber-space” is mentioned so often that its usage may seem banal and too commercialized. However, the experience gained from computers and networks in many ways can be understood as “psychological space”. When users turn on their computers, launch the programme, write an e-mail or login in their online service, they

often feel, consciously or unconsciously, as they are entering a “place” or “space” filled with wide spectrum of meanings and uses. Many people searching the World Wide Web will describe their experience as “travelling” or “going somewhere”. Spatial metaphors – such as worlds, domains or rooms are common in articulating the online activities.

In a deeper psychological sense, users often describe the way their computer is a continuation of their mind and personality, or a space that reflects their tastes, views and interests. In psychoanalytical terms, computers and cyber-space can become a type of “interim, transitional space” which is continuation of the intra-psychological world of the individual. It can be perceived as a transitional zone between the individual and the others, which partially belongs to him and partially to others. Some people feel like their mind is “merging” or “interfacing” with that of the others as they read e-mail messages on their screens, group discussions or chat messages written by their “internet friends” (Suler, 2004).

When someone experiences the cyber-space as “extension” of his mind – as a transitional space between self and the others – the door is already widely open for all kinds of fantasies and portable reactions that are projected in this space. Ideally, people use this as an opportunity to better understand themselves, as a way of exploring of their identity. In less optimal conditions, they use this psychological space for ventilation or to simply express, “play” their fantasies and frustrations as well as fears and desires that are fuel for these fantasies.

3. BEHAVING IN CYBER-SPACE

3.1 Case: Republic of Macedonia

Critical event: the Skopje Fortress (Kale) incident - a clash between two groups of football fans. The incident involved “Komiti” fan club on the one hand and “Shverceri” on the other, along with some local residents from around Kale, whereupon police could not prevent the close contact of supporters and opponents of the construction of the object on Kale which was said to be a Church-Museum.

According to Internet world stats¹¹⁰, Macedonia, a country with over 2 million inhabitants and with over 1 million internet-users, in March 2011 had 836.820 Facebook users and 40,3% penetration in this network¹¹¹. In terms of the critical event – incident on Kale – Facebook was the most referred to/most wanted social media. Therefore journalists alarmed: „Nobody controls the hate speech which is spreading as fire on social networks” and „after the mass brawl on Kale between the young fans, ethnic Macedonians and Albanians, a real war of words was ongoing on Facebook. New pages devoted to the Church-Museum on Kale are being opened with a lot of insults, profanity, threats, and calls for revenge... The lowest and the most primitive vocabulary was being used. It seems like there is a real competition on who is going to come up with the most insulting word or association. In the virtual unyielding battle all means are being used – from calls for final reckoning, photographs from 2001 to photomontages.”¹¹²

110 <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats4.htm>

111 <http://www.internetworldstats.com/facebook.htm>

112 <http://www.utrinski.com.mk/?ItemID=805DDFEA67A308448890CD2E70DF7A26>



Things became so serious that the Ministry of Internal Affairs requested from Facebook to erase groups associated with the events on Kale that promoted or shared content with aggressive qualities.¹¹³ The Macedonian section of the BBC broadcast at the time suggested that social networks serve as a fuse and that through the example of the so-called „jasmine” revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt they became a tool for organizing protests. The severity of the event and the density of the communication were sufficient incentive to investigate what was happening in the virtual space on Facebook, in the context of the research about reporting on diversity.

2.2 Subject of the research: *The bad and The good*

After the critical event on 13 February when the fight took place, there were 23 pages created and maintained on Facebook since 15 February, and they were related to Kale events in different ways.¹¹⁴ The research lasted until 1 May 2011 and until that time, out of 23 web pages, only 4 pages remained “alive” and functional. “Alive” and functional means pages on the walls of which until May 1st people were still posting “posts”.¹¹⁵ Given the large number of posts on all active pages, the page with most “likes” was chosen (a term from Facebook jargon – for the number of users on the network who marked that they like the page). The biggest number of “likes” had a page that promoted peace, love, cooperation, and tolerance. However, since this was the only “positive” page of that kind, it was necessary to analyze also the posts of the “negative page”, which was ranked second based on the number of “likes”. Based on the number of “likes”, it dominated independently compared to other negative active pages. Otherwise, it is characteristic that out of 23 created pages on Facebook related to the events on Kale on 13 February, 22 were negative and only one was positive, but compared to the negative ones, it had far fewer posts on its wall. For this and for any other future analyses, it is indicative that the positive page promoting peace, love, tolerance and coexistence, was secluded and unique among “the pack” of pages on which dominated the nationalism, divisions, intolerance, hate speech and aggression of the most worrying kind.

For the purposes of this analysis, the negative page was embodied in the *Bad character* or just *The Bad*, and the positive page in the *Good character* or only *The Good*.

3.3 Analysis of the profile of *The Bad*

Before we go into more detailed analysis of the “face” (read the wall) of *The Bad*, it would be good to make a small screening of all negative pages (characters) that were created for the events related to Kale. If we put the photographs that represent these “bad pages” on the focus of the analysis, we can conclude that 4 out of 22 pages had real photographs of incomplete construction on Kale, which was present in other media as well (particularly printed media); 5 out of 22 pages did not have any photographs, and

113 <http://www.it.com.mk/mvr-bara-da-se-izgasnat-agresivnite-facebook-grupi-za-crkvata-na-kale/#ixzz0q37wdi1s>

114 http://www.facebook.com/search.php?q=Crkva%20Kale&init=quick&tas=0.344391175541636&search_first_focus=1302004773715&type=pages
 115 „Alive” page in fact is the one on the wall of which are attached at least several posts per month. Most sites were created in the period between 15 and 17 February; there are few records from that period and nothing has been posted on them since then. This does not mean that any of these inactive pages will not function in the future and will not have greater dynamics of posting on the wall.

other visual elements that were put on “the bad” pages were related to: the Albanian flag, Macedonian flag, real photographs of the events.....

The names that were given to “the bad” pages were: *Church on Kale*; *Church-Museum on Kale*; *There have always been Church on Kale and there will be one*; *Church on Kale? Nooo*; *Church on Kale, all have gone crazy?...*

The highest number of “likes” had the page with a photograph which showed the unfinished construction of the planned object on Kale, until 1st of May, when the page was opened for the last time. This page will precisely be presented in the further procedures and phases of the analysis.

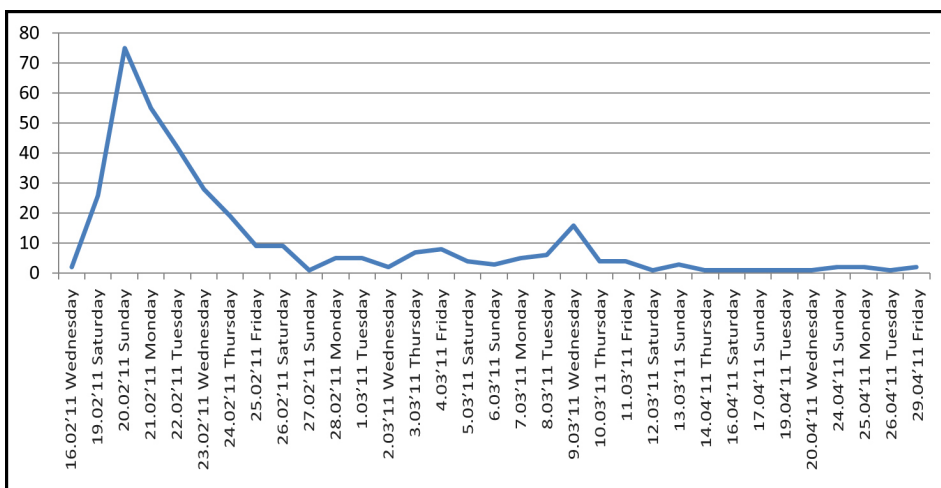
„The face” of *The Bad* was analyzed from many angles: (1) Picture, photograph and name that represent those who write on the wall of the page; and (2) Name, picture and photograph that represent the person who posts on the wall of *The Bad*.

How does the bad look like? There were 357 posts on the wall of *The Bad*, in the period of the critical event until the 1st of May. The analysis of all 357 posts showed that they refer to 145 different subjects, out of which – interestingly – 1/5 are written only once, and 1/10 of them appeared more than five times with their posts. Most of the 145 subjects introduce themselves as males (the profile is presented with a male name and surname) – these are 78% or 114 subjects; 10% or 14 subjects introduce themselves as females (the profile is presented with a female name and surname); 7% are group subjects (with names such as *Komiti West*, *Macedonian Brotherhood*, *Macedonian United Forces -Prilep*), and only 3% of all 145 subjects have unclear name (such as: *Swine flu*, *Vaci Vac*, *Mwacki Backi*).

The information related to the use of the nationality and national symbols in the names used to introduce those who post on the walls is interesting. In fact, 8% of the subjects posting on the wall of *The Bad* are profiles with listed nationality in their names, such as: *Alexander of Macedon*, *Macedonian to the core*, *Macedonian patriot*, *Proud Macedonian*.

When the focus of interest is the visual component posted on Facebook walls, it can be said that 60 out of 145 subjects introduce themselves with a picture of a boy (man) or girl (woman), certainly, without examining whether it is false or real (personal) picture of them; 21 out of 145 subjects use national or religious symbol as their profile picture (Albanian flag, eagle, Macedonian flag/ the official flag of Kutlesh, Christian cross, picture of national heroes); 8 subjects use military symbols (usually NLA soldiers, airplanes), whereas the rest 54 subjects use group pictures (pictures with two, three or more persons, actors or famous television shows...). Two subjects introduce themselves with vague picture or a photograph.

3.3.1 When was *The Bad* active?



Number of posts in the research period

The chart clearly shows that the page was created on 16th of February, posts started appearing on the 19th, it reached the peak in 6 days, and as of 24th of February the frequency began declining. The reduced intensity lasted until the end of the analysis.

In this segment of the analysis, it was interesting to see the existence and the type of any possible connection between Facebook page activities with the publishing on the traditional electronic and printed media. Namely, it is expected that in the days with more posts to see more published articles related to the critical event in the printed or electronic media. Starting from this assumption, the frequency of the posts in the six most watched and most read media in Macedonia was investigated.

This table shows the dynamics of the articles related to the events on Kale, published in Utrinski vesnik, Vreme, Vecer, A1, Sitel and Kanal 5 TV. It is evident that, more or less, all media outlets start with larger number of articles on the 16th of February, then the number declines, then it rises again and reaches its peak during the weekend (26-27). The second confrontation (reckoning) was scheduled for that time, but calls and requests of all relevant political and state institutions to calm passions acted preventively. This trend is present at Utrinski vesnik (which truly increased the number of published articles in its Saturday edition of the 26th of February), Vreme, Sitel and Kanal 5 TV. In Vecer and A1 the number of articles constantly decreased, without fluctuation despite the announced critical event for the weekend. Although this does not have to do with greater generalizations, still there is a trend of connection between mainstream media and the new social media. When a certain event is frequently reported in the classic media, it is more likely that this same event will be the topic of discussions, debates or disputes on the social networks as well. In fact, reporting on Kale in mainstream media shows it as being in function of agenda setting on social networks, in this case Facebook. Of course, in order to show the relation and the interference between traditional and new media, a more complex research is required.

Month	Date	Day	Number of posts on Facebook	The media and number of published articles related to the critical event from 13 th of February					
				Utrinski vesnik	Vreme	Vecer	A1	Sitel	Kanal 5
February	16.2.	Wed.	2	7	4	2	3	2	2
	17.2.	Thu.	0	3	1	1	2	3	1
	18.2.	Fri.	0	4	1	2	1	2	1
	19.2.	Sat.	26	5	2	1	1	3	2
	20.2.	Sun.	75				1	4	3
	21.2.	Mon.	55	4	1			2	2
	22.2.	Tue.	42	2					
	23.2.	Wed.	28			1			
	24.2.	Thu.	19						
	25.2.	Fri.	9						
	26.2.	Sat.	9	1					
	27.2.	Sun.	1						
28.2.	Mon.	5							

Frequency of the articles related to Kale in 6 Macedonian media

3.3.2 What is The Bad presenting and talking about?

Text

41% of the total of 357 posts observed in the research period are without textual record or have only picture, video or a link to a video clip. At this point, 210 posts (59%) which do not contain any text were interesting. They were analyzed from many angles, starting from their common valence. Most of the texts, as high as over 80% (total 169 texts) were evaluated as generally negative, about 14% were evaluated as neutral and only “modest”, 6% were evaluated as texts written with positive intonation. The neutral ones usually talk about the construction of a church, whereas the positive commonly refer to texts about Easter greetings. Negative texts were reviewed from the point of the presence and the volume of profanity in them, is there hate speech and to what extent, are there trumpet-calls for war, reckoning, nationalism, killing and whether the text contains and highlights self-praising, emphasizing personal power and strength.

The data in the table illustrate the analysis of the negative texts with respect to the four components.

Types of posts			
Profanity	Hate speech	Trumpet-calls for war, reckoning	Self-praising
51%	71%	47%	11%
86	120	79	18
Curses, insults, Mocking the physical appearance	Words to underestimate mock and humiliate a person or a group for some of its characteristics (race, gender, ethnic background, nationality, religion...)	Words that invite to conflict, war, reckoning, killings, separations, divisions and spreading of nationalistic feelings	Words that glorify own greatness, strength, power and supremacy

Types of negative texts (frequencies and percentages)



As it can be seen from the data, *hate speech* can be identified and concluded in most of the negative texts. Macedonians are „Kauri”¹¹⁶, „Traitors”, „Kauri tribe”, „Artificial nation”, „Bulgarians”, „Rotten creatures”... on the other hand, Albanians are „Sh...”¹¹⁷, „Traitors”, „Rotten Sh... tribe”, „bustards converted to Turks”, „Enemies of Macedonia”, „Rattle-brained”, „Sh... – arnauti”, „Albanians-shags”, „Sh... cattle”, „Incestuous nation”, „Infidels”, „Shipoj”, „Dogs”...

The presence of profanity is approximately the same (percentage) as the presence of the trumpet-calls for war, reckoning, nationalism, separations, killings. Vulgarities are of the most extreme kind and their description is far below the writing level of this text, thus will not be analyzed, except for indicating that it is about curses, insults and mocking of the physical appearance and threats involving sexual act, of the most vulgar and most primitive manner.

Calling for war, separations, killings, nationalism was also present in half of the posts. The following are the most common words and sentences used in this context: „Die Bulgarians”; „Death to the fetid infidels”; „Death to Kauri”; „You all go to Albania”; „Great Albania!”; „Great Macedonia!”; „Only dead Sh... is a good Sh...!”; „We will exterminate you all”; „Macedonia is Bulgaria”; „Go away from Kale, do not make me f*** you all”; „Clean Macedonia”; „Let us slaughter Sh...”; „Karpalak for Komiti!”; „Karapalak for all Kauri!”; „Sh... in Pchinja”; „Mass graves for Sh...”; „Gas chamber for Macedonians”; „We will slaughter, we will burn mosques”; „Long live Ahmeti, he will exterminate you all”; „Death to all Macedonians”; „Your end will come – we will kill you all same as in Brodec”; „Go away from here – this will be Great Albania”; „Destroy filthy Albanians”; „Come together Macedonian brothers to fight for the homeland.....”; „Macedonia is only to the Macedonian people”.

Emphasizing the own strength, power and capability is present in the lowest percentage of the total negative texts and refers to the calls: „God is with us”, „Macedonia Timeless”, „We are the strongest – you Macedonians cannot beat us”, „Long live all Christians”...

Visualisation and audio

52% of the total number of “posts” on the wall of *The Bad* was without any picture, photography or video clip – there was only text, and in 46% video clip was posted. Photographs were rare (only 4) so were the links – in total three.

Video clips, as majority were analyzed in detail, and according to their content they could be divided into several groups:

1. The first group was the largest and it contained video clips with militaristic content. In this group there were clips with:

- NLA soldiers (2001), NLA soldiers singing war songs, military actions of NLA, demonstration of weaponry used by NLA, celebrating the victory of NLA, celebrating the day of liberation of Kosovo, short movie about the army of NLA in Kosovo, Kosovo war 1999 – NLA destroys a church, NLA – black tigers, Albanian special forces. There were 23 video clips with such content in total.

116 The publisher distances itself from the terms or linguistic constructions used in this article. Their transmission is made solely for research purposes, in the context of theoretical interpretation by the author of this article.

117 Hereinafter in the analysis some terms are intentionally deleted or are not transferred entirely to avoid possible additional effect of insulting or negative stereotyping of members ethnic or religious groups

- Macedonian “wolves” killing Albanian terrorists, video material from Brodec, video material from Tetovo 2001, armed soldiers killing two Albanian terrorists, Macedonian sharpshooter, marching of the Macedonian army. There 8 video clips with such content in total.

- Parade of the Russian military units emphasizing the grandiosity of the army of the Russian Federation.

2. The second group is consisted of clips – music, video spots, which can further be grouped in:

-songs about the events in Kale (total 7); a hip-hop song *Go away from Kale, do not make me f*** every last one of you*; a hip-hop song *Fuck Serbia*.

-songs about Macedonian soldiers: songs about the Wolves – Macedonian sons (3); song about the Tigers; song about the Macedonian traitors: *Fuck Greece*; song – Macedonia is timeless; song about the Macedonian special forces; a rap song about the Macedonian soldiers;

-original folk Macedonian song: song “Macedonian girl”; song “If I die or I get killed”; song “Macedonian land”; the first anthem of Macedonia from 1923 – *Rise you dawn of the freedom*; the current anthem of Macedonia;

- other clips with music and video spots contained Albanian folk music; love songs from Gjeorgji Krstevski; video spot *Freiheit: Every Time*; Macedonian church music, liturgy; “*Katjusha*” – a Russian song, a song from Iron Maiden: *Alexander the Great*.

3. The third group of clips is about referring to the history and presenting historical facts on the immediate or distant past, thus here we can distinguish:

- Clips about the real origin of Albanians; clips showing who are the Albanians (suggesting that Alexander the Great was originally an Albanian); clip for Albanians – the oldest nation in the world; a clip with the history of the Albanian skullcap;

-clips about the historical facts that Macedonians are Slavs, and not Antique Macedonians and a clip showing that Albania recognises gay marriages (excerpt from the laws).

4. The fourth group of clips refer to the football matches and video material from the stadiums; on the one hand there are clips for

-winding of Komiti; 20 years celebration of Komiti; Komiti going to a match – fights on the streets; Football tribune from Serbia with parola *Kill the Sh...*; winding in the match between Vardar - Shkendija; video material titled “*Komiti beat Sh..*”;

-on the other hand, there are clips that show an empty stadium without Komiti (only Albanian fans).

In the fifth group there are clips with natural beauties of Macedonia, and in the sixth group are all other clips: picture from the ruined mosque in Prilep (3); video material from Sheshelj in Hague (2); video material of rituals of people converting to Islam; K-15 short video spots mocking the Albanians; Ednooki – Alji, Alji; reporting with Jofe on the Kale events; video material of riots in Kale; the fight in Delcevo after throwing the cross on Epiphany; Macedonian flag of Vergina, Boki 13 – the biggest Macedonian star.

3.3.3 'Liking' of posts and comments on the posts

Facebook profile posts were receiving different number of “likes”: 25% received from 0 to 27, and 75% received from 2 to 7 “likes”. 6 posts that received more than 10 “likes” are distinguished: 2 posts from the creator of the profile, named as Church on KALE, with the same short text: A Dead Sh... is good Sh...!; 2 posts are from “female profiles” and contain mocking and insulting texts¹¹⁸ There is a post whose profile cannot be identified (at least not from the picture and the name being presented), and it contains a clip from Brodec titled: this is how powerful are Sh.... Their turn will come – we will kill them all like in Brodec!; one post is with a clip from the riots of Komiti near Nerezi, on the way to the football stadium in Gjorce Petrov, with a text: Shverceri beaten like donkeys by Komiti!

The analysis of the comments given on all analyzed posts on *The Bad* showed the following results:

Number of comments on posts	Frequency	Percentage of the total number of posts	Percentage of the total number of posts that had at least 1 comment
0	126	37% without comment	
1-5	125	63% with comment	55,3%
6-10	51		22,6%
11-15	29		12,8%
16-20	11		4,9%
21-25	5		2,2%
26-30	1		0,0
30 and more	4		2,2%
		100%	100%

Number of comments on the posts of the profile of the Bad

It can be seen from the table that ten posts with its contents provoked over 20 comments by other visitors – posters on *the Bad*. Posts with profanity that cause great interest according to the number of comments will not be subject of analysis.

Next is the presentation of the other posts which do not contain extreme profanity, but attracted attention and writing of comments.

- a post with attached clip, titled: Where are you Komiti? The clip shows a video material from the incident that happened before the football match in Gjorce Petrov. The post shows how Komiti attacked citizens from the suburb of Nerezi on their way to the stadium.

- a post with quoted first verse from the hip-hop song Go away from Kale (originally): Go away from Kale, do not make me f*** every last one of you, there is no church there is mosque here oleeee...

- a post such as: „HEY PEOPLE I HAVE GOOD NEWS.... KAURS IN GOSTIVAR HAVE STARTED GOING TO PRIVATE CLASSES TO LEARN ALBANIAN.. ISN'T IT GOOD, YOU MUST SPEAK ALBANIAN AS WELL. :))

118 (Originally: A.K.: you cattle sh..., get lost go to FUCKLAND AND DO NOT BOTHER ALL DAY LONG, THE PAGE CANNOT BE VISITED BECAUSE OF YOU, IT STINKS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!/ H.K. WHO IS THE BIGGEST HOT-SHOT AMONG ALBANIANS? – THE ONE THAT HAVE PASSED ALL DOMESTIC ANIMALS :))))))))))))))))))

THIS IS HOW IT GOES, EASILY BUT SURELY YOU WILL LEARN ALBANIAN. WILLINGLY OR FORCED TO DO SO :-)))) HEEH”

- a post such as: „LISTEN YOU SH..., YOU ARE NOT ALBANIANS YOU ARE NOT EITHER SH..., YOU ARE MACEDONIANS WITH SPEECH IMPEDIMENT”

- and a post such as: All Kairs will go to where they came from, we will remain in our land and it will be as it used to be always GREAT ALBANIA :)

3.4 Analysis of the profile of *the Good*

It was highlighted in the beginning that following the incidents on Kale 23 pages were created and out of them, 22 explicitly or in an emphasized manner promoted views and opinions of hostility and intolerance, and there was only one page promoting peace, love and understanding. That page was appearing under the name *Peace and love instead of a church and mosque on Kale*, and for the purposes of the analysis, it was called *the Good character*, or only *the Good*, and everything was analyzed on it in the period between 15th of February until 1st of May, the end of the research period.

From the point of view of the expressed polarization, it is indicative that *the Bad* had 846 “likes” while *the Good* had 1.354 „likes”.

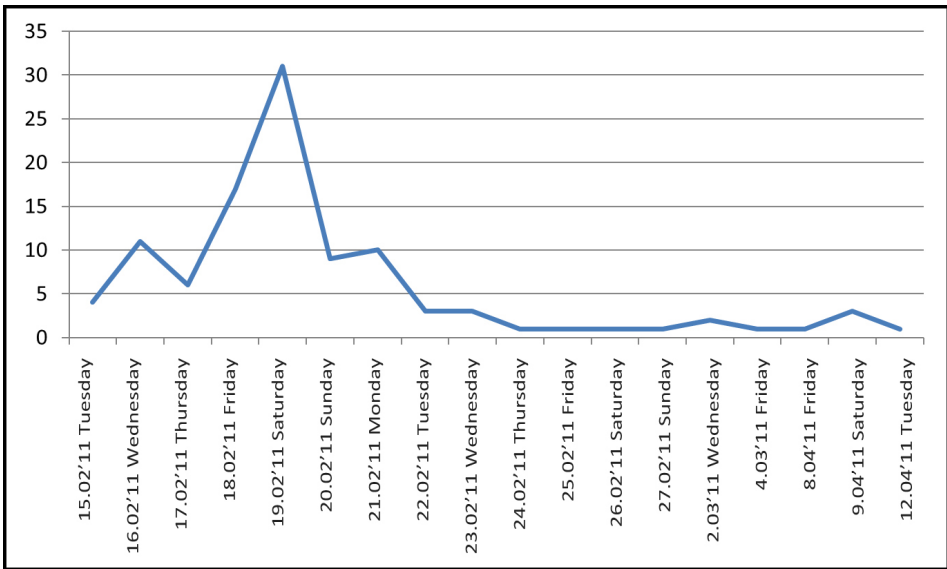
3.4.1. How does *the Good* look like?

There were in total 111 posts observed on the page of *the Good* in the period of the critical event until 1st of May. The analysis showed that it is about 87 different subjects, of which only 8 appear more than once. The creator of the profile, named as *Peace and love instead of church or mosque on Kale*, appears in 17 posts himself.

Most of the 87 subjects, at *the Good* and at *the Bad*, introduce themselves as males (their profile is presented with a male name and surname): such are 66% or 51 subjects, and 34% or 25 subjects introduce themselves as females (their profile is presented with a female name and surname). One of the subjects is the creator of the page introducing himself as *Peace and Love instead of church and mosque on Kale* and one introduces himself with the sentence: „Imagine no religion!!! Think... just think”.

When the focus is on the picture or photography that represents those who post, it can be concluded that 53 out of 87 subjects introduce themselves with a photograph of a boy (man) or girl (woman), assuming that it is a personal photograph. The distinctive mark of the creator of the page is only one, whereas other subjects in their introductions use various symbols such as: peace sign made of children hands, flowers, book, science, flag of the Republic of Turkey, flag of the SDSM... other subjects use group photographs (photographs with 2, 3 or more persons, mainly a boy and a girl, or an adult and a child besides him).

3.4.2. When is the Good active?



The time when posts are posted on the profile of the Good

According to the graph the activity on the page is the highest immediately after its creation, and after that declines sharply. From 16th to 21st of February, 76% of all posts are posted on the page. Similar dynamics was observed at *the Bad* as well, the difference is that the activity lasts longer there and is more frequent. It is indicative that it is again most active in one of the weekends (this time on Saturday), which sociologically can be interpreted as evidence that social networks absorb most of the free time of the individuals.

3.4.3. What does the Good tell and show us?

Text

39 out of the total 111 posts observed in the research period are without text and 72 have text incorporated. In this part, certainly, posts with any kind of texts were particularly interesting. The text was analyzed from the point of view of key words bringing its key message.

*most frequent were those posts where the key word PEACE dominates (sayings: what is the peace; message for peace; „Peace“; „Peace at home – peace in the world“; „Only peace and respect“; „there is no good war nor bad peace“; „let us be the champions for peace and love“; „peace and love – forget about church and mosque“; „there is no way to peace – peace is the way!“; „make love, not war“.)

*this was followed by posts commending the initiative for creating such a page, compliments were given to all supporting this page, the idea of writing something smart on Facebook was being stimulated.

*messages to addressed to all for a better future („Stop the violence”; „Let us build a future – not a past”; „Give us science, education”; „You do not have to build churches – let us build discothèques and coffee bars on Kale”; „We have too many temples – we do not need more”).

Visualisation

Out of the 111 posts on the wall of *the Good*, only 15 contain a picture and 34 a clip.

Pictures that appear on the whole *Good* character are: the sign of peace; peace – not war; children from all around the world surrounding the Globe, the world is in their arms; outstretched hands of all; the sun, flowers, rainbow, Christians protecting Muslims praying in Cairo; „peace and love”; „faith, love and peace”.

Only 5 clips, out of all clips uploaded on the profile of the Good, were not songs and referred to sayings about love, the life of Mother Theresa, various pictures showing love and unity. Songs that were often promoted in favour of the Good were: Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie We are the world, John Lennon Imagine; further on there also songs like Peace of Depeche Mode, We are the champions of Queen, Be my brother be my friend of Nonstop, Love is all of Jani, All you need is love of The Beatles, Let the sun shine in from the movie „Hair”, Heal the world of Michael Jackson, the songs: To all the children and Skopje you will be the joy from the festival “Golden Nightingale”, Let us save the world of Karolina, Toshe and other Macedonian singers...

3.4.4. Liking of posts and comments related to the posts

The posts on *the Good* were receiving different number of “likes”, from 0 to 37 “likes”.

	Number of likes					
	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	20-
Frequency of posts	8	38	32	22	5	6
Percentage of posts	7	34	30	20	4	5

Number of “likes” for posts on the profile of the Good

Posts that received the majority of “likes” refer to:

-The creator of the page Peace and Love: *There is neither good war nor bad peace*

-the post of an individual: *instead of church – flower park*

-the post with attached clip of Karolina, Toshe: *Let us save the world*

-the post carrying the message: *There is neither good war nor bad peace*

-the post like “it is pity that people are following the mind of few politicians that brought the state from world level to African level. I wonder why, for so many years, people do not protest against the bad economic situation or the unemployment for example, instead they are continuously being manipulated for such ugly and bad games. How long will these absurd conflicts last? We should realize that the biggest stupidity is to see ethnic, religious or other types of hate in the 21st century, as Ataturk would say – peace at home peace in the world. Only this is the solution :)”

-the post as „*HEEY there are still smart people in Macedonia....great side ♥♥♥... PEACE TO ALL!!!*”

The analysis of the comments given on the posts of *the Good* showed the following results:

Number of comment to the posts	Frequencies	Percentage of the total number of posts	Percentage of the total number of posts with comments
0	88	79% without comments	
1	9	21% with comment	22%
2	7		39%
3	1		30%
4	5		4,5%
6	1		4,5%
		100%	

Number of comments provoked by the post

Unlike the posts on *the Bad*, that had higher percentage of comments, the posts on *the Good* did not provoke such reactions among the others who were active on the profile.

By analysing the posts that provoked more than 3 comments, we can distinguish:

**the post praising the creators of the group* („Thank God we though of opening and “liking” something smart on this damn Facebook... :”)

**„Instead of church – a flower park” and*

**„Skopje - Shkup many names, single meaning”*

3. Social networks and cultural diversity

Considering the fact that the behaviour of individuals on Facebook was analyzed in the context of the events on Kale, we can distinguish several important segments of the behaviour in the cyber-space in crisis situations and topics that touch the diversities. The first segment is related to the identification/management of identity, which can be examined through pictures, photographs and names that are used to introduce those who put their posts on the wall of the page.

One of the more interesting things about the Internet is people’s opportunity to present themselves in different ways. Everyone has the opportunity to be oneself; they can slightly change the style or enter an experiment with their identity, and change their age, biography, personality, physical appearance, gender... The user name that someone will choose, the details specified for themselves – all this is important from the point of view of how the individuals spread and manage their identity in the cyber-space.

The identity is very complex aspect of the human nature. John Suler (2002) lists several interlocking factors which are useful while navigating in the maze called cyber-space.

3.1. Level of dissociation and integration

The identity of a person embodies diversity. Each has many “sectors” in his/her personality and plays many roles in his/her life – as a child, student, worker, parent, neighbour, and friend. The cyber space offers false opportunities for each of these specific aspects of the Self. Some authors even speak about the individual’s possibility to “decon-

struct” himself online. This implies that we should not present ourselves entirely: how we see, how we speak, how we move, our history, thoughts, feelings and personality – we do not have to put everything in a big “package”. In different environments we can separate and present our characteristics in “packages” of different sizes and contents. Thanks to the thousands present online individuals and groups, any individual who is dedicated to a particular professional, vocational or personal topic can express, emphasize only one side of his/her personality, while completely reject or ignore some other sides.

However, the wish to remain anonymous, reflects the need to eliminate these critical functions of the own identity that the individual does not want to show in a certain environment or group. The desire to lurk, completely hide – points out the need of the individual to separate the whole personal identity of his/her perception of those around him: he wants to see, but not be seen. Given that our research has conducted identity analysis (pictures and names used to present those posting posts) on the wall of *the Bad and the Good*, we can certainly formulate two conclusions. The first conclusion is that those who prefer *the Bad* are individuals who, at greater extent, want to remain anonymous and to emphasize only one aspect of their personality (more often they use vague names, photographs, pictures of actors, group names...so they show dissociative behaviour). The second conclusion is that individuals who are active on the page of *the Good*, from the aspect of managing their identity feel freer in showing their personality and, in psychological terms, show integrative attributes.

3.2. Positive and negative valence

Subjectively, a person may feel shame, guilt, fear, anxiety, hatred about some aspects of his/her identity, respectively acceptance and respect of other aspects of his/her existence. Those operating in the cyber-space, which in some way violate or break the rights of the others, or hurt themselves in the process are known to usually release some negatively “charged” aspects of their psyche. Put simply, , this means that when individuals hurt, humiliate someone , in fact they show that they have problems with some parts or aspects of their personality. But usually this purely cathartic act does not lead anywhere. Insecure or passive-aggressive individuals often remain stuck in the endless river of online-arguments. If for a moment, we look at post and comments of the profile of the Bad, we can immediately notice the endless wrangles, circumventions, validations, insults. Others may use the internet-space as an opportunity to manifest their positive characteristics or to develop new in the process of “self-actualization”. The expression of the positive characteristics is typical for individuals who post on the wall of *the Good*.

3.3. Used Media

It is known that people express their identity through the clothes they wear, their body language, their career and hobbies they prefer. These things can be seen as a media through which one can communicate with the environment. Similar to this, in the cyber-space, people choose one specific communication channel in order to express



themselves. There are many possibilities and combinations thereof, and every choice leads to emphasis of the specific attributes of one's identity. People that rely on communication only through the text prefer the semantics of the language, and perhaps linear, rational-analytical dimension in itself, which is manifested through the written discourse. They can be "verbalizers" as described in the cognitive psychological literature, unlike "vizualizers", who can enjoy in more symbolic, pictorial and holistic judgments that are expressed through the creation of clips spots, pictures, avatars, web-graphics.

Some people prefer synchronous communication – as a chat – which is reflected in spontaneous, free form, wittily expression of the self. Others, yet, are ready for a cautious, reflecting style of asynchronous communication, as in social networks, forums and electronic mail. There are personalities that do not prefer using web-cameras, and others prefer to dive into highly interactive social environments where the exchange is fast and goes synchronised. The data from the used media in *the Bad and the Good* can serve as a basis for discussing the reasons for the frequent use of clips in *the Bad*, and the greater use of texts and pictures in *the Good*. Perhaps the rational-analytic dimension is on the side of those who are active on the second profile.

3.4. The transfer between people online

The psychoanalytic concept of the "transfer" is especially important for understanding the online-relations. As the experience with the other person is often limited to text only (very unclear situation), there is a tendency of the individual, when he tries to interpret the behaviour of others in the cyber-space, to project his own various desires, fantasies, fears, attitudes towards the "ambiguous figure" on the other end of the cyber-space. The process of transfer can be identified in "mixing" someone's brain with another, as some users describe the experience related to the cyber-space. In fact, some users describe this mix of the brain with the computer itself. The transfer with the computer or with other users can be done in a very subtle, complex manners. The saying used by a famous passionate cyber-personality is well known: „wherever I go on internet, I actually find myself.“

The unconscious motivation with respect to the transfer will also affect on this "filtering process", who determines the choice that a user makes while establishing online-relations. Users may be surprised when they discover that those who share the same opinion and whom they meet online are same type of people as themselves. Thus, this almost inevitable technical "home" appliance can be very sensitive. Namely, even when communicating through text only, individuals focus on the relations and characteristics among others, who are a hidden need in them.

If while searching the Internet we almost always find ourselves then with great confidence we can say that the fact that people meet along on the page of *the Bad or the Good* is not accidental at all. So, the "deliberateness" is related to their mutual interests, hidden desires, motives for entering in such online-behaviour.

Online-disinhibition effect. It is well known that people in cyber-space talk and do things that they usually would not do in the real world. In this space they get relaxed, feel less inhibited, and express themselves more openly. Researchers call this "disinhibition effect". However, it is a double-sided blade. Sometimes people share too many per-

sonal things about themselves in the cyber-space. They reveal their hidden emotions, fears, desires. Or, show unusual acts of kindness and generosity. This is usually called benign disinhibition (Turkle, 1994).

However, disinhibition is not always that benign, so in cyber-space, coarse language and harsh criticism, anger, hatred, and even threats are often used. In extreme cases, individuals begin to explore the dark and underground worlds and places of pornography and violence, which otherwise they would never visit in the real world. This disinhibition is called toxic and usually has one simple blind cathartic action, acting to release the unpleasant needs and desires without any kind of personal benefit or benefit for the others. Most probably, it is responsible for the enormous amount of profanity, insults, threats...written on the wall of the profile of the Bad. The benign disinhibition was particularly observed at *the Good*.

Internet-regression. By communicating on Internet people are in regression (they regress), manifesting it with the free expression of sexual terminology and aggression as they would never do it when communicating face-to-face. This was happening in *the Bad character*. Expression and excessive generosity, understanding and tolerance are also considered a sign of regression. This was happening in *the Good character*. It is impossible and unnatural for an individual to have such an understanding, support and empathy towards an unknown stranger, whom he never met and probably will not even happen?!

4. Conclusion

Current estimates show that over 23 million people communicate over the Internet, and that number increases by 12% per month. No one is planning nor controlling this increase. We live in an exceptionally exciting and technologically continuous innovative era, in which it is difficult to predict the boundaries of the human rising. But, in circumstances of such a gigantic scientism and planetary civilization progress, the modern *Homo sapiens are able to consistently* return to the primitive, infantile, and even pathologic behaviour. Why?

The communication on Internet has its positive and negative sides, good and bad sides. Positive sides relate to the generosity, openness, tolerance and the support that they can give, often even to strangers in the cyber-space. The good side in the analysis was manifested through the character of *the Good*. The negative sides relate to the manifested aggressiveness, sexual verbal primitive attacks (attempts and threats to it), as well as the increased vulnerability, after which the character of *the Bad* on Facebook has been identified.

In fact, they are the two sides of the coin. The absence of inhibition, speaks about the great kingdom of freedom of Internet, inexistence of a regulation and prohibitions and restrictions related to it. But, at the same time, this could identify the main "culprit" for the inappropriate, vulgar and uncivilized behaviour in the cyber-space. The lack of restrictions enables the immanent human needs for communication, education, e-banking, etc. However, also "anonymity" in managing identity in the virtual space implies opportunities for manipulation and misinterpretation, as well as satisfying the low level desires immanent to antisocial individuals.



By the end of the vague status of the cyber-space as a global public space, at a time when administrators of social networks have been “disciplining” so far the hate speech only, it enables expression of all real or hidden and repressed needs, desires, and wishes. However, in the same – or even at a far greater extent, this freedom can be used also for paedophilia, cyber-crime, hate speech, stigmatization, dirty or inflammatory vocabulary of intolerance. Undefined communication channels on internet opens the floor for self-created projection, thus instead of competent and adequate interlocutors –aggressive, rude, conceited and bad interlocutors will appear very easily. Chances for the Bad to appear are even bigger just because he does not participate in the official public discourse/space, since he is aware of the danger of isolation and sanctions. But, the fact that he is being heavily restricted – or even sanctioned – by the social institutions and relevant state sanctioning bodies at all levels, at least by far, does not impede at all his “explosion” on the internet.

The analysis of the Skopje Kale case showed that the explicit hate speech, inflammatory speech that implies intolerance and violence and the bad language experienced expansion on the social networks. Namely, 22 out of 23 pages created for the events on Kale, were embodiment of *the Bad*. *The Good* was lonely and less active. The only difference was that it was more praised compared to *the Bad*, thus it had almost twice as many fans, at least formally. The main dynamics remained and probably will happen to *the Bad*. The Good “lost the battle” in this case, at least when it comes to the topics related to ethnic, religious and cultural diversities.

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NOTE FOR THE PUBLISHERS

The School of Journalism and Public Relations was founded in 2008 by the Macedonian Institute for Media as a not-for-profit high education institution, with a mission to advance the quality of education for journalists and specialists in public relations in the Republic of Macedonia. As part of its bachelor's studies, the School offers a vocational education in journalism and corporate communications, by providing modern and applied study programs. The degree program in journalism is the only one in the country and in the region that it is aligned with the UNESCO model Study program for education of journalists from 2007 and the Declaration of Tartu, adopted in 2006 by members of the European Journalism Training Association (EJTA). The study program in Corporate Communications and Public Relations has been developed in compliance with the highest standards of high education and the Code of Ethics of the International Public Relations Association in Great Britain. Since June 2011, upon decision of UNESCO in Paris, the School of Journalism and Public Relations became a UNESCO Chair in Media, Dialogue and Mutual Understanding. The basic objective of the Chair is to contribute to the strengthening of social cohesion, multicultural understanding and intercultural communication in the Macedonian society. This objective has been accomplished by various activities, implemented by the School of Journalism and Public Relations and the Institute for Communication Studies:

- Development of contents related to intercultural communication and diversity reporting in the study programs of first cycle at the School and in the postgraduate studies organized by the Institute for Communication Studies;
- Development of research activities that focus at the role of media and communications in the society: academic or applied researches implemented by the Institute for Communication Studies;
- Development of knowledge, skills and professional values of the journalistic community and the specialists in public relations on intercultural communication and diversity;
- Awareness raising on the importance of diversity reporting and on intercultural values through: debates, conferences, programs, media products and campaigns;
- Publishing of research studies, handbooks, textbooks and Internet based learning resources;
- Development of programs for informal education and for stimulation of creativity among youth in high education related to cultural diversity, understanding, tolerance and social cohesion.

The Institute for Communication Studies (ICS) was established in July 2012 by the School of Journalism and Public Relations, with a primary objective to advance the fundamental and applied research in two key areas: (1) journalism and media and (2) public relations, corporate communications and integrate marketing communications. In December 2012 the Institute was accredited to offer postgraduate studies in two areas: Management of Strategic Communications and Media Management and Multimedia. The connection between the teaching and learning process with the scientific and research work enables the Institute to encourage involvement of young people in research activities and to advance the process of development and spreading of knowledge.



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